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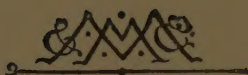
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TORONTO

I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE

BY
STEPHEN PAGET *e*

Take of English earth as much
As either hand may rightly clutch,
In the taking of it breathe
Prayer for all who lie beneath,
Not the great nor well-bespoke,
But the mere uncounted folk
Of whose life and death is none
Report or lamentation.

Lay that earth upon thy heart,
And thy sickness shall depart!

It shall sweeten and make whole
Fevered breath and festered soul.
It shall mightily restrain
Over-busy hand and brain.
It shall ease thy mortal strife
'Gainst the immortal woe of life,
Till thyself restored shall prove
By what grace the heavens do move.

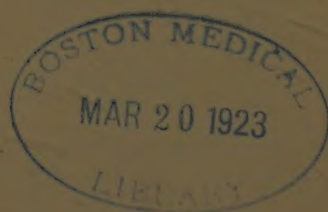
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REC'D ON MEDICAL
MAR 20 1923

I

TOWN MICE TURNED COUNTRY MICE

I HAD not thought that Æsop's Fables were so old. I find that some of them are "the common property of all Eastern nations," and that critics have even doubted the existence of the man Æsop. To me, near sixty years ago, they were new as new can be: and I read them—or am I thinking of Lafontaine?—as a story-book of real creatures. Not that mice could talk, not really talk: but the town mouse and the country mouse were almost as real to me as were my parents. They put in happy fable the moral which Sandford and Merton put in heavy prose. First, the town mouse went to stay with the country mouse, who had everything very simple. He did not stay long. It may have been only for "the inside of a Sunday"—horrible phrase—just for lunch in a cornfield, and tea with the country church mouse. It could hardly have been for a week-end: the fashion of week-ends is later than my childhood. He was bored by the country, and went back to town. Then, the country mouse went to stay with him. Oh, such a grand big mansion, and such delicious things to eat: ham, cheese, plumcake. But there was a terrible giant of a footman, and a

ferocious lion of a cat: and the country mouse fled home, and joined the local branch of the Life and Liberty movement.

I envied the town mouse, I despised the country mouse. Nothing, not even a footman, would have prevented me, at my age, from going on with the plumcake. Now, sixty years later, the fable has come into my head again. But things are changed, and it comes with a difference. It invites me to think, not of the contrast between town mice and country mice, but of the transformation of town mice into country mice. I am glad of the failures, in work and health, which had this effect on me. It is not yet complete, nor ever will be: I am observing it in the process: not in myself alone, but likewise in Mrs. Mouse: for she and I went side by side into the country, as our first ancestors went side by side into the Ark, antediluvian male and female that should replenish the earth with mice.

One word about the half-way multitude of the suburban mice. I am glad that I do not live in Ilford, Willesden, Bromley, or Sydenham. The more honour be given to the lives and homes which exalt them. So dutiful and so patient, the lives: so comfortable and well-ordered, the little houses and their gardens. It is only snobs and fools who poke fun at the suburbs. Still, I am thankful that Fortune put me outside the ring round Greater London: thankful for the magic tunnel which finally

divides a world adherent to London from a world that is the country.

The process of this transformation might well engage the attention of our psychologists. It might even divert some of them from "psychoanalysis." The process is very gradual. At one time it moves apace, at another it is arrested. It has moments of illumination, it has moments of misgiving. Subliminal instincts rise above the threshold and flood the ground-floor of the new house: and the familiar furniture withstands them, and proclaims the forfeited advantages of the old home. London refuses to leave off. By rail and road, by post and telephone and newspapers, by goods consigned or delivered, London is in the country. Moreover, London supplies us not only with material goods, but with imaginings. "I wonder how their dinner-party went off: I wonder whether they will come on Saturday"—by these and the like ejaculations, we confess the power of London over us.

We have no desire that London should leave off. I remember, at Nuremberg, in 1878, an "English service" in a hotel-room, with six worshippers, and a long sermon which included the phrase, "Not that I would do away with human knowledge altogether." Worth all the journey to Nuremberg, to have heard that phrase. We would not do away with London altogether.

Only, of late years, London has been strangely unkind to elderly visitors. It is larger than ever, but less lovable; more insatiable of pleasures, but not happier; noisier, but less articulate. It can be as unfriendly, in a black mood, as Petrograd, where in the winter of 1915-16 I felt, through all the enveloping warmth of personal kindnesses, that I was in the presence of a frozen city which did not care a copeck whether we lived or died. Ah, but London in a golden mood—London rejoicing, London mourning, London exultant in fine weather—the imperishable magnificence of it, body and soul, is more wonderful than ever. Talk of the country—are not London parks the country? And the daily tons of flowers, in thousands of shops, on thousands of stalls, are not they the country? Sixty years ago, there was not one flower-shop all the way from the Marble Arch to Mudie's, except a few fruit-shops with flowers subservient: not one, I think, in Regent Street, nor in Bond Street. Miles of parks, tons of flowers—the country is in London. But London has to pay heavily for its open spaces and its flowers: we here get them for nothing. "With a great sum," says London, "obtained I this freedom:" and the country answers, "But I was free born."

They who exchange London for the country must behave carefully, lest the country should be offended by them. For, in this wood near Athens, I am

Bottom. In the room in Quince's house, with the clinging smell of glue-pots and sawdust, and the traffic and street-cries passing the door, and the company of Snug and Flute and Snout and Starveling, I was full of confidence. Here, I have the ass's head on my shoulders. I am dimly conscious of trespassing. I am in strange surroundings: but I stay in the wood. "I will not stir from this place: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing." I receive stupidly the gifts of Titania, her love, her kisses. The most that I require of her fairies is that they should scratch my new head. She offers me fairy music: and I say that I have a reasonable good ear in music: let us have the tongs and the bones. She offers me fairy food: and I say, or my head says it for me, that I have a great desire to a bottle of hay. Yet, when the dream ends, and everybody all round is disillusioned, I am as well off as any of them:—

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream—past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was.

That is how I receive the gifts of the country; with enjoyment, but not with insight. It is not

for me to talk of crops, live stock, and garden produce; nor to predict the weather; nor to distinguish the notes of all the birds. To the farm-labourer, the gardener, the born countryman, I must ever be an outsider, come for change of air. The affectation of country lore would show up on me like the red cloth on the German prisoners who used to be about here.

My wife does understand the country; especially, the goings-on of her poultry, and the surprises of her garden. But these experiences are within her control: I am just as good as she is over experiences which are beyond our control. I have heard her speak with contempt of a hen,* and with disappointment of a corner of the garden: but the uncontrollable experiences—the woods, the common, the nightingales in due season, the legions of bluebells—are above contempt or disappointment.

I never thought that I should live to be kept awake, and sung to sleep, by nightingales. It is not easy, at first, to recognise the note of pain. The ear is taken up with the unexpected diversity of themes, with the variation of compass from deep to almost shrill, and with the interrupted rhythm, incessantly making and breaking silence. But the note of pain,

* The hen had eaten one or more of its own eggs. None but Christian Scientists can deal with such hens. As a practitioner of Christian Science told me, "We put the hen in a separate partition: and I treated it. I realised God's idea—that it could not be God's idea that the bird should eat its own eggs. You see, it was something like what sin is in us."

once learned, is not forgotten: the quick, pitiful Oh, oh, oh!—rising by semitones or quarter-tones, or falling by them, but usually rising—then a moment of silence, and then a wholly different theme. It is a curious trick of sound in darkness.

Taking them song and all, and all in all, I prefer the lark to the nightingale: for the lark is overhead, and music overhead is delightful: so is music that comes up from a depth; I am remembering past joys—the sound of the sea from the edge of a cliff in Cornwall, and the music of the orchestra beating-up to the corner of the front row of the gallery at the opera, and the music at Mr. Gladstone's funeral coming up from the screen to the triforium of the Abbey. Music level with us is at some disadvantage. But I admire the lark not only for its choice of the sky as a concert-room, but for the continuity of its song through the alternations of its breathing, and for its power to sing and wing both at once: such a whirring and incredible speck of brown fluff, with such a torrent of music rushing down to earth.

Enjoyment, when the weather is favourable, seldom fails me. Beech, birch, pine, gorse, heather, bracken; stretches of common and park; woods with cunning little paths to be learned slowly—all introduce themselves with charming and informal gaiety, and put me at my ease. I am able to admire them; unable to have the mind of science toward them. Happily, as between a man and a maid, so between

me and this kind country, love runs ahead of science. Here are woods so full of bluebells that the ground is all coloured and scented. The extravagance of them persuades me that there must be a Ministry of Bluebells. The miracle is wrought annually. What is the good of investigation? If I do but watch the behaviour of a spider, or note the flowering of an apple-tree, thought is lost in amazement. The spider's individuality, the tree's deliberate intention, will not let me into their secrets.

Sometimes, but not often, Nature is impatient of my complacency. On these occasions, the beauty and the silence of the country bear witness to lives of men and women in London who have earned, and have renounced, the right to be leisurely, and will hold on to their work till they drop, till they die in harness—a poor phrase for their victory—and I swing round to one of Scott Holland's letters, Brindisi, 1886: "Human interests are all in all. Without a core of human interest to vivify it, beauty is a poor superficial affair. No Salerno Bay, or Sorrento hills, can compensate for the loss of Rome." Nor Surrey hills, he would say, for the loss of London. But Surrey has a core of human interest. It is not uninhabited.

We came here, we two, Emeritus and Emerita, at the opportune turn of age; neither too old to make friends with the young, nor too young to make friends with the old, whose minds are spheres for

crystal-gazing. To have been, for so many years, one of the most fortunate of Londoners: to have seen and known so many great people: to have lived in London, except for compulsory outings, through the years of the War—it is almost too good to be true, that I have this inexhaustible wealth of memories to play with, in my new surroundings.

This residential neighbourhood offers us no lurid contrasts, no desperate encounters. We move gently in a quiet luminous haze of kindliness and courtesy and acceptance of us as we are, which we did not invent but discovered. Especially, we have pleasure in the goodwill of our poorer neighbours. Nobody here is poor to the bone: but a group of tired-looking cottages, at the end of our lane, gives us unaffected friendship with lives less elaborate and more casual than ours. The children of these cottages greatly admire us: they run to us, thrust their hands into our hands, tell us everything, take us to their hearts. I have observed them for two years, and have never heard them swear nor seen them quarrel. They and their parents have adopted us; and have admitted us to the Freedom of the End of the Lane. We have deserved it: for we are advice *gratis*, we are the use of the telephone, we are occasional jobs, we are Father Christmas. Nothing short of death or departure will estrange that end of the lane from this. To one of the children, a miniature Ariel, I would leave something

in my will, if I did not know that the other children would be hurt.

I have no less pleasure in the wider courtesies of the countryside and the village. I like to be called Sir, and to have hats touched to me. Sometimes it embarrasses me, and I answer Sir with Sir: but the embarrassment goes, and the pleasure stays. Young men ought to dislike to be called Sir: middle-aged men ought not to care one way or the other: but men in later life covet these trivial insignia, and are hungry for them: not in vanity, but in the joy of standing on the old ways that will outlast any revolution. I find myself able to deduce, from a touched hat, from a Sir, that God's in His heaven—all's right with the world. Death will not call me Sir: but Life does.

Best of all, the friendliness of lane and countryside and village is continuous with the friendliness of our own class toward us. I am prepared to back our clerics against London clerics, our doctors against London doctors, our manners against London manners, our ideals against London ideals. Friendships come as natural here as bluebells.

Perhaps the War has helped to make the place thus kind. Possibly, in the years before the War, which do not count now, it was narrow, gossipy, stand-offish. Perhaps the lesson of the War goes farthest in quiet little places which have time to think and are immune against the fever of reaction.

Each of the villages about here sent out its men; displays its roll of honour, and its flower-decked shrine in a church or by the wayside; and is careful to remember its dead: and the length of the rolls of honour tells what was endured through those years. The old phrase, *genius loci*, finds its proper meaning in local sorrow and local pride. The *genius loci*, once on a time, was a nymph in a sacred wood: and the woods here are beautiful enough to contain any amount of nymphs: but the local genius, the abiding spirit of the place, is not in the woods, but in the lives of men and women with whom we two have thrown-in our lot.

Then comes the Londoner's answer. "All this wordy fuss about a backwater! You and your tea-parties! Have you forgotten what it is, to belong to a city which gets the best and the biggest and the most and the first of everything, and has in it more lives than are in all Canada?" No, that is not the Londoner's answer. It is London's answer—if London could think us worth answering. The individual Londoner is not London: and I dare to stand up to him, or her.

It is a common belief, among Londoners, that they are somehow partakers of London's immensity.*

* As Byron, in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, says of St. Peter's:—

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal.

This belief is not wholly false: and I will not stop to ask, In what way, if in any, is London more immense than the Surrey hills? For I know that London does give, to many of its inhabitants, moments of real exaltation. But these fugitive moments do not overcome the sense of personal insignificance. The good Londoner would love to have that zest for the streets which was in Johnson and in Lamb: he would like to be able to say, "I have cried with fullness of joy at the multitudinous scenes of life in the crowded streets of ever dear London." He cannot say it. The streets are too crowded now. The moments of exaltation are too rare: the sense of personal insignificance is too persistent. He cannot isolate his liking for multitude: it refuses to be separated from his longing for solitude. He must get home, there to recover his identity; there to assure himself, by shutting his front-door, opening his letters, ringing his bell, handling his possessions, that he still has individual existence. At home, he renews his strength for next day's plunge into immensity.

Londoner, Londoner, you say with some justice that we here live in a backwater. Are there not fifty thousand backwaters in London? Perhaps you live in one of them. You mock at the size which we take in thoughts. What size do you take? Say that we take a large six-and-a-half. Do you, at the most, take more than a small six-and-threequarters? Our tea-parties are a poor thing

in your sight. But are your dinner-parties ablaze with intellect and wit? You are a citizen of no mean city. What have you done for it? You despise the range and level of our interests. Londoner, tell me true, How wide is the range, how high the level, of yours?

II

THE WRITING OF A LIFE

SIR SIDNEY LEE, in his Leslie Stephen Lecture, 1911, defined the principles of biography. His exposition is perfect. Nothing is to be added to it, or taken from it. Only, it seems to forbid all but the best of writers; it is deterrent, by weight of authority; it is a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. But why should he be less decisive? Surely, he does well to guard the honour of biography, and to keep off the crowd that would profane it. There is a saying by Novalis—it is the beginning and the end of my acquaintance with him—that we touch Heaven when we lay our hands on a human body. But we touch Heaven with more audacity, when we lay our hands on a human life. “Let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature, that breeds these hard hearts?” Regan gives herself to be anatomized; for she is a stage-figure, constructed on plain lines. The difficulty is with a life in real life, to sift and weigh and arrange all that made it what it was.

Still, we must not be unduly timid: for we may

do useful work, even if we fall short of Sir Sidney Lee's counsel of perfection. It may come to any man or woman to write a life. For some of us, there is the need of earning a little money: and we look back, and find this or that outstanding life, dominant once, but neglected now. As the rough-hewn effigies on Easter Island have at last been studied and interpreted, so there are lives waiting for interpretation; not rough-hewn, but elaborately finished, and set in history, so that the student of any one of them touches a hundred interests. Others of us, in the writing of a life, are "doing it for the love of the thing." The life was there: we warmed ourselves at its fire, sunned ourselves in its light: and we want to tell everybody about it. So many people would like to hear of it: so much of it was delightful, and as good as good can be. It had plenty of admirers, but well deserves to have more: *Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, Quique amavit cras amet.*


Lives thus written ought to be gently treated, not set-up as targets for the arrows of young critics. That the widow is the worst enemy of biography; that men may be divided into those whose lives ought to be written, and those whose lives ought not to be written; that the biographer has added a new terror to death—these epigrams are like heavy old gentlemen looking out of club-windows at the crowd in the street. It is true that some biographies are

very dull. Yet, with few exceptions, they who write lives are faithful servants, lovers of their work; to be encouraged, not discountenanced, by the guardians of the ideals of biography. Let not the guardians threaten the amateurs. *Trespassers will be prosecuted.* As if no right of way ran through the enticing woods. *Keep off the grass.* As if the grass did not belong to all of us, every blade of it.

Some of us, perhaps, are scared by the grave sound of the name of Biography. These official words ending in *-graphy* are in need of adjustment. As biology is the study of life, so biography should be the description of life, not of lives. As geography is the description of earth, so photography and calligraphy should be the description of light and of beauty. It is better to talk not of biography, but of the writing of lives.

At least, we can avoid the phrase "a full-dress biography." The writing of lives is not uniform. They must attain a good likeness, but there is more than one way of attainment: the likeness may come very slowly, or may come quickly, of its own accord; as in the memoir of John Smith of Harrow, and in some of the short memoirs of men killed in the War—slight, informal, eager, sensitive writings, full of pride and faith and loyalty—voices crying in the wilderness, and broken with pain. Our valuations of biography must be revised in the light of recent experiences.

But the occasion may demand, or may seem to demand, the full-length biography, the authoritative life. The chosen writer is glad that the work has been entrusted to him; but is afraid of what may come of it. Here is the chance for a tale of magic. A great man has just died, and a family council meets to settle the question, Who shall write his life? Many side-issues perplex them: but the decision falls at last on his only son. There are nearly a thousand letters. As the young man works at them, a shameful secret leaps out, hissing and venomous: and his father is at his elbow, trying to explain away what happened, and forbidding him to refer to it. The young man is driven up and down, between his father and the truth, like a hunted creature: he cannot escape into the open: he is trapped and helpless: he desperately burns the damning letters, and hands over the work to an old friend of the family. She is a devoted admirer, a facile writer, with a weakness for florid eulogy: she writes half-a-dozen pages daily: but the dead man is back at her elbow, as he was at his son's: he is furious, that she is making a saint of him. By overpowering will, he wrecks page after page; she becomes irresolute and confused: the whole thing is out of proportion, unbalanced, muddled with heaped-up corrections, no strength in it, no unity, no conviction: till at last she surrenders, and hands over the work to a methodical old gentleman,



who in more prosperous days was associated with the dead man, at a respectful distance, in affairs of politics and of business. He sets himself to all the ins and outs of the politics, all the ups and downs of the business: he amasses facts and figures, minutes of meetings, incidents of partisanship and of partnership, speeches to constituents, reports to shareholders: and the dead man is still there, saying, "Cut all that: come to me: tell them what I really was like:" till at last this third writer, caught in a labyrinth of his own making, despairs, and hands over the work—but you can finish the story: for the book was never finished. The dead man, for one reason or another, would not allow it.

But my theme is the pleasure, not the peril, of the writing of lives. And, as Ambroise Paré addresses himself to the young surgeon, so I venture to address myself to the young biographer. I assume that you are not writing of somebody remote; that you are impelled by friendship, or by home-love, to write of somebody who has lately died. It goes without saying, that you will start on the ordinary lines. You will collect materials, ask for letters and reminiscences, and visit places which will come into your book. Keep three note-books, and keep them separate; one for the transcription of letters, one for general notes, and one for the scribbling of rough drafts of sentences and plans for chapters.

You will be tempted to make your book too long. There are lives which are worthy of "exhaustive" writing: but they are few. Think rather of what you can leave out than of what you can get in. Surely you may be content with 300 or, at the most, 350 pages. The War has touched everything, even biography; our young men have been killed: we are not in the mood for long books in two volumes about men who died old in their beds. Besides, we cannot afford to buy them.

You will need a model: and I think that a well-read man would advise you to take Carlyle's Life of Sterling, and Stevenson's Life of Fleeming Jenkin. Not that you can appropriate the style of either: but they have to perfection the gift of portraiture. Masterpieces of great size are useless, as models, to the likes of you and me.

Here it comes into my head to say that you must be very careful over your first and last chapters. In the long stretch between them, you will go wrong again and again: be the more careful to begin and end your book well. Waste no time over his ancestors. Let him be born on the third page, or at the latest on the fourth. Beyond his grandparents, you will hardly find anything: nor will your readers give much attention to anything that you find. Leave out the "good yeoman family" who spelt the name differently, and the "collateral branches." Avoid the didactic method of the

Life of Sir Francis Galton, which pushes us back through a series of Hanoverian and Stuart ghosts contributory to Galton, who arrives mottled all over with birthmarks, showing the importance of eugenics. Your man was what he was, and did what he did, and failed where he failed, more of himself than of heredity. Great-grandpapa, cut in silhouette, with the family profile, is not important. Get your man born quick. But give endless thought to your description of his parents: they require all your skill, and more: you cannot be too diligent over them: but you must work in small compass, as if you were painting a pair of miniatures on ivory.

Dismiss childhood and boyhood lightly. Neither grope in them for prophecies, nor quote Wordsworth, nor write as if the child were yours. Give the facts, and there stop. It is true that the letters of children may be admirable: a child's candid opinion of a new plaything may surpass a man's opinion of the League of Nations: therefore capture your reader, if you can, straight away, with chapter one: but do not spin it out with hints and comments.

Your first chapter and your last are as different as birth and death. You and your reader, side by side with the man who lived the life, journey through the book: it is like the story of the walk to Emmaus. At first, you do not know him, and you tell him the news about him, as if he were a stranger: then he

expounds to you the things concerning himself: till you cannot let him go, and he stays with you, and at the point where you know him, there he vanishes. So this last chapter will be written with a heart that burned within you on the way. But you will not call the attention of the public to your heart. With him dying, nobody wants to hear you crying, or to see you putting the room tidy. Besides, you cannot wish to be heard or seen: you prefer to let your reader be alone with him.

Do not be afraid to write out the details of his last illness, and his death. They touch that in us which is natural and wholesome. Lewis Nettlehip has said, "Death doesn't count." But, in your book, it does count. Think how many written lives are dulled and padded so thick with common stuff that we hardly see what the man was made of: but his death is slurred over, as if something were wrong with it. There is no excuse for this want of proportion. You have told us how he faced life: tell us how he faced loss of life.

End your book there. If you have failed, in the book, to make him explain himself, it is too late now for you to redeem that failure by any attempt to explain him. We do not want an extra chapter or half-chapter, your analysis of his temperament, your summing-up of his influences, your verdict on his doings. You would produce only a few laborious pages, not worth reading.

But do not, for fear of dragging on, be awkwardly abrupt. Do not ask us as it were to shut the book with a slam on the bare announcement of his death on such a day at such an hour. I venture to think that the *Life of Pasteur*, which is one of the best books in the world, ends too abruptly. "On Saturday, September 28, 1895, at 4.40 in the afternoon, very peacefully, he passed away." The whole chapter is of exquisite beauty; but these words are hardly strong enough to be the last words of all. As, at the end of *Hamlet*, there is a dead march, and a peal of ordnance is shot off, so you must arrange a loyal and reverent leave-taking.

But you will not be so unwise as to end your book with any sudden reference, the first of its kind, to his religion: or, even more unwise, with a tag of verse. Nobody cares for your flourished text from Browning or the Bible. Set yourself to think out what he would have liked. Some saying of his, or some turning-point in his course, or some intimate memory of him, may suggest a good ending: so may the thought that his work did not stop when his life stopped. There are men whose work seems to die with them: actors, artists, orators, writers. It was mortal as they were mortal, and is immortal as they are immortal. But there are other men, whose work is developed in the work of their followers, and is extended to unforeseen purposes: you may be able to find a good ending, in

this thought of work not arrested by death, but quickened and multiplied.

I come now to your title-page, dedication, preface, and headings. I am Grandmama, planning little garments for the book that you are expecting. The title-page is the christening-robe: any amount of hand-made embroidery: I hate a bare title-page—*So-and-so. By So-and-so. Illustrated. So-and-so. London.* Why should your baby be dressed in this ugly shift for its public baptism? Why should not your title-page be admired? Here is the place for quotations. Do not hesitate between three passages, each of them exactly right: have all three of them: crowd the page. Your publisher will raise his eyebrows—"It will look so crowded." Why should it not? But these annunciatory sayings must not be spoiled by small or ignoble type. Force yourself even to sacrifice one of them, that the survivors may be legible to us who can ill afford to buy books, and are lovers of booksellers' windows. If you care to exercise our brains with your quotations, you can set us a bit of French or of Latin to translate: but be careful to exercise our hearts: give us something to read, on your title-page, that shall be as drums and trumpets and warmth and colour.

As a bare title-page is at fault, so is a bare dedication. *To So-and-so.* What spark of interest is here? If he or she to whom the book is dedicated has extorted a promise from you to say only *To So-*

and-so—well, you must keep your promise. But think what you might have said. Think how Stevenson would have done it. He would have written a little dedicatory letter, every word of it weighed, every line of it beautiful, yet without sign of effort: or a little poem, as good as his best prose. I am downright sorry for you, thus compelled not to dedicate but only to direct or label your book. It is not simplicity; it is sterility. A dedication ought to be what Plato says that a poet is, a light and winged and sacred creature. Still, *To So-and-so* may be better than a comprehensive phrase. *To the Master, Fellows, and Undergraduates of Saint Jude's College*. Or again, *To All who were inspired by his Example I offer this Record of his Life*. These omnibuses are clumsy vehicles: you cannot pay one compliment to such a load of passengers.

Call your preface by its right name; do not call it a foreword. The intention of the preface is to say why you, of all people, took the work in hand; what materials you had for it, what help was given to you; and how you have used them. There is no need for a long descriptive list of helpers: you are free to thank them collectively. Try to keep your preface down to the outlines of the book: as a ground-plan at the beginning of a guide to a cathedral.

Perhaps you will ask some person of authority to write an introduction to the book. You cannot

write it yourself. Introductions are to commend books to the public: you cannot commend to us your own book: you preface, you do not introduce. If you forgo an introduction, you may need to amplify your preface. But, in that case, you must give to it your utmost skill, with endless patience. These few pages must be so delightful that all of us will read them.

Now for your headings. I do not mean that you should head each chapter with a quotation: it is a poor device: but each of the left-hand pages must be headed with the man's name: I hardly know why. Each of the right-hand pages must be headed with the title of the chapter. If your publisher asks you to head each right-hand page differently—hundreds of headings, no two of them the same—resist him.

Over the division of your chapters, you must not be the slave of time. Written lives ought not to tick like clocks. Break the monotony with a chapter on some special subject, or with a group of letters, or with passages of a diary.

Resolutely avoid the use of appendices. Be sparing of foot-notes. Where you are driven to use a foot-note, let it be of sufficient length to command attention, and let it be printed in legible type. Have none of those jerky, slovenly, one-line foot-notes which merely vex the eye—*See ch. vii, p. 100*—or again, *This venerable lady died in the following year*. The points of a good foot-note are (1) It is

essential to the purpose of the book. (2) It is long enough to be worth reading. (3) It is written very carefully, every line of it well thought-out.

You will perhaps be tempted—as I know from my own excesses—to be prodigal of letters. The safest plan, I think, is to transcribe them all, to begin with, in whole or in part, into one or more big notebooks. There let them wait for you. Slowly, they will adapt themselves to your design, as it were by natural selection. What is vestigial will be repressed; what is vital will be developed. Leave them alone, thus to cancel or attract each other. It will clear your way a little; but not enough. The difficulty remains, that if you make use of a great multitude of letters, your book may be over-weighted: and if you reject all except “his best letters,” you may lose the quiet homely touch. Besides, you are not sure of your ground. Did he like, or dislike, letter-writing? Did he let himself go in his letters, or hold himself back in fear of affectation of style? Was he favourable, or indifferent, or hostile, to self-consciousness? Did he know, did he care, whether his letters would be published after his death?

Hold yourself free to amend his punctuation, his use of capitals and of words underlined, and so forth. Omit, where you can, the *My dear* and the *Yours sincerely*. Do not habitually put rows of dots, like buttons on a coat, to mark the leaving-

out of sentences: we cannot guess what they stand for. Letters are to be edited as letters, not as ancient manuscripts. Where you need to add in brackets an explanatory word—for instance, the English for a Greek word, or the change of a man's title—use brackets shaped thus []. Keep brackets shaped thus () for ordinary use.

Do what you will, the letters, in the precise lines of cold print, are not exactly what they were as he wrote them, as his friends received them. Try to keep the life in them, under these new conditions of rigidity and of formal spacing. I am thinking of Mr. Lytton Strachey's *Life of Queen Victoria*. I venture to doubt whether he ought to have printed in italics words once underlined; and in capitals, words twice underlined. A word printed in capitals now is much heavier than it was when she underlined it seventy years ago.

Here are some scraps of advice left over. (1) Have no dealings with *phenomenal*, *heterogeneous*, *reliable*, *adaptable*, *præternatural*, *practically*, and the like dangerous words. (2) Make your own index: nobody can make it so well. (3) If he wrote books, give us a full and accurate bibliography. In the British Museum catalogue, you may come across two dates assigned to one book: the later is the publisher's date on the title-page; the earlier is the date when a copy of the book was sent to the Library. Go by the earlier date. (4) Avoid, except in your

preface, the use of the first person. Circumvent it where you can. With ingenuity, you may get through 300 or 350 pages without it. If, at this or that point, you cannot escape, use it boldly: spare us the uncomfortable sense that you are clumsily dodging; that you are disguising yourself as "one" or as "we."

Last question of all. For whom are you writing? Who are in the foreground of your mind, as you add page to page? Probably there will be one man or woman, who knew him well, and knows you well. It will not always be the same figure: you will change one judge for another: you will face them one at a time, and submit something to each of them: some description, or opinion, or phrase. This invisible presence will guard you against cheap cleverness, bad style, helpless adverbs, parasitical adjectives—"l'adjectif, c'est l'ennemi du substantif."

And there is the family. Do not imagine that they will want you to be untruthful. At the most, they will ask you, here or there, to reconsider and recast a sentence, or to leave out some anecdote which, after all, is hardly more than gossip. Surely you can do that much for them, without whom your book would be nowhere. It will occur to you, with a twinge of conscience, that you were posing, were trying to be brilliant, even to score off a dead man—oh, the least little score, no harm in it—still, you are not sorry to put your pen through the lines

which vexed them, and to write something better; remembering that the book, every page of it, is about him, not about you.

For your encouragement, let me tell you what George Eliot said to one of my people. "After all," she said, "biography is the only thing worth reading." And for your warning, let me remind you that men and women are mysterious creatures: we never get all the way down to the secret of them. There is no opening, in biography, for that sort of quantitative and qualitative analysis which is habitual in chemistry. You will be tempted to say that your man was inconsistent. Of course he was inconsistent: or he would not have been a man. But you do not explain mysteries by talking of inconsistency, as chemists talk of an irreducible residuum. You are out of your depth in his life: just as you are out of your depth in your own life.

III

REDUCED CIRCUMSTANCES

THE conjunction of these two words is neither good Latin nor good English. I have just looked them up in my Latin dictionary. I find that circumstances began life in the singular, not in the plural. The word was not in a hurry to begin life: it is post-Augustan: and it was not born in Latin, but was adopted from Greek. There is *circumstantia hostium*, *circumstantia angelorum*, and so forth: enemies surrounding, and angels encompassing. I do not know when the word began to be used in the plural.

Circumstances are anything and everything round about us. Therefore, it is correct to say "under the circumstances." They are towering cliffs: we loitered on the beach, under the cliffs, and are caught between advancing sea and pathless rock. They are the high encircling walls of our besieged city, and we are herded under them for shelter. Likewise a dish-cover is circumstantial to the food under it: and the dome of the British Museum reading-room is circumstantial to the readers under it. But the best of all examples of circumstance

comes in a verse of the Psalms—"The hills stand about Jerusalem: even so standeth the Lord round about His people." Those were the circumstances of a man in Jerusalem: he was under his own hills and his own God. I am the centre of my God and of my environment: two circumstances which make one circumstance: and that not as a ring round me, but as a sphere all round me.

The other word is less proud; it crosses the stage of thought most impudently, with its hands in its pockets: it makes faces at me, trying to be funny. Of its antecedents, I find in the dictionary what I expected. To reduce, in good Latin, is to bring back, reinstate, restore. Constantine was reduced to Greece, and Mr. Asquith to the House of Commons. To reduce a dislocation, is to restore a bone to its original place: to reduce a temperature, is to bring a temperature down to its proper level. That was the meaning of the word: no hint of loss or failure: it was a word of success, of home-coming; the return to camp after a victory, the return to Rome for a triumph. But the prefix, the tricky featherweight *re-*, touched the word with a sense of withdrawal: Horace uses it of enfolded valleys. Gradually, it became a word of disheartenment and of disappointment: and at last it entered the service of Lady Poverty—one of the most incapable servants that she ever had—and we fell to talking of reduced circumstances.

This unhallowed conjunction of two words, both of them in the wrong, ought to be declared null and void. We might at least keep them apart. Addison has the phrase, "men easy in their circumstances." We might at least say of people, not that they are in reduced circumstances, but that they are reduced in their circumstances. It is we, not our circumstances, that are marked down. The question is, Are we marked down to our true worth, or below it?

Consider what has happened. Before 1914, reduced circumstances were brought about by ill-health, bereavement, advancing age, lowered efficiency, bad investments. Except this last—and even a bad investment may be nothing to be ashamed of—here are elemental forces, our natural enemies, invincible. It is not our fault, that we cannot hold out against them. Sure as death, whose front line they are, they will have their way with us. Then, the War: then, the hardship of the years after the War. Where shall we now find, for the victims of reduced circumstances, consolation?

It will not console them to hear from us that money, after-all, is not everything. No one word more nearly describes what money is, than the word *everything*. Money is charity: they ache to be charitable. It is the saving of life: they ache to be saving lives. For every flower in this garden, there

is a crowd of people who cannot afford sixpenny-worth of flowers: for each day's meals in this house, there is a crowd starved: for each fire in the house to-night, there is a crowd of children left cold: if I do but throw a log on my fire, some Austrian or Russian baby cries for it, and shivers and coughs: let alone London babies. What is there, that money is not? It can be what it likes: either charity, or self-charity, which is the refreshing of our souls with an occasional wholesome pleasure.

Once on a time, I was doctor to a home for poor governesses. I learned from them the cruelty of reduced circumstances: the inevitable closing-down of their energies. They were depressed, ill-nourished, inefficient. Youth and good looks and romance and hopefulness had taken leave of them. New methods of teaching had left them far behind—they and their wizened little accomplishments, which were like the monkeys that make worn-out barrel-organs attractive. These poor ladies waited for employment as the sick folk round the pool of Bethesda waited for health. But the only angel that could help them is called Money, and is covered with silver wings, and its feathers like gold. Between them and that angel, all communication either way was cut off.

I say and stick to it, that money is everything, if only you have enough. But a small fund, with a multitude of claims on it, is wellnigh useless.

Look at the dismal grinding slowness of the old-fashioned "voting charities." Or look at the stinginess of the Civil List Pensions. It is one of our national disgraces. Here is a recent award: To —, in view of her late husband's services in the investigation and prevention of rinderpest, and in consideration of his death through contracting leprosy in the Public Service, £50. Here is another: To —, in consideration of the services rendered by her late husband in connection with inoculation against enteric and typhoid fevers, at considerable risk to his own health, and of her straitened circumstances, £50. These two men, by their work, and by their example, enriched the world: and we give to their widows this beggarly dole: and to how many do we give nothing? When you think of what we spend on picture-palaces, football-matches, luxuries, drink, gambling, and wild-cat Government Departments, this Pensions List makes you howl with shame.

A third flagrant example of the cruelty of reduced circumstances is the poverty of the clergy. They have no Union: they cannot strike. How does the poor parson still hold out, with the price of necessities rushing up round him? Though he were the most useful and best educated man in the parish, he may have to go short of food and fuel, and his wife and children with him. He is never out of work: but there is no rise in the worth of livings to

meet the increased cost of living: there are parsons so poor that they might almost envy the bodies which they commit to the ground, beyond the need of necessaries.

These poor governesses, widows, parsons, are helpless. During the War, it was easier for them to make light of hardship: but the closing-in of their circumstances, since 1918, is pitiful. Their only hope is in the daily renewal of will, faith, and courage. Many of them achieve this renewal; they get as much happiness out of reduced circumstances as some of us get out of circumstances vastly expansive and expensive. I watch the divine conjuring trick; I sit and stare and applaud: I could have sworn that the hat was empty: I cannot imagine how they manage to produce from it yards of paper ribands, and crackers, and a rabbit. They go on: more yards of ribands, another handful of crackers, and bless my soul! another rabbit. They are wonderful: I could kneel to them; and I blush, when they thank me for my kind attention.

In the light of these victories of spirit over circumstances, I amend my phrase, that money is everything. It is not will and faith and courage. Its power is not creative, but redemptive. "I think," says Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, "I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year." Assuredly, she would have been a better woman, though she mocks at the notion: "I could order half-a-

crown's worth of soup for the poor. I shouldn't miss it much out of five thousand a year." At the least, she could have been more honest: "I could pay everybody, if I had but the money." You and I, with that income, would have the time of our lives. Though money be powerless to create virtues and abilities, it is mighty powerful to sustain them. The arts, the sciences, love of learning, love of travel, quietness of thought, open-handed giving, hospitality—these are the delicate fruit-trees: money is the sheltering wall, the south aspect, the fertilised soil, the protective netting. The rougher fruits, the currants and the gooseberries, can look after themselves: but the apricots and the nectarines require every advantage. And some fruits are so fastidious that they must have hothouses, and a special gardener to cosset them: but these are hardly worth the bother of growing, except for the pride of exhibiting.

What will you do with your five thousand a year? I know what I will do with mine. First, I will so far enlarge my circumstances that I shall not feel reduced in them, nor straitened, from this time onward. It will be delightful, to ease them a bit, and breathe deep, as a tired woman takes off her stays: delightful, to forget them, and to ensure my life against a relapse of anxiety over them. It will not cost much. The War, and the present, and the near future, proclaim the absurdity of cost-

ing much. I shall have plenty of money for other delights. Generosity, after all these years of abstinence, shall send me reeling down unfamiliar channels: I will subscribe to strange charities, be lavish of unexpected gifts, put explosive donations in dusty collecting-boxes and flat-chested offertory-bags, tip small children fantastically—play, play, play with my money. Nor will I stop here. Better fun still, to let other folk join in the game. As in some old fresco—Florence, Padua, I forget where I saw it—Christ descends into Hell and sets free its prisoners, so shall my redemptive money shake the walls of reduced circumstances, and break the gates, and set souls free to be generous.

Here I sit in my arm-chair and spin sentences, with a brain at one end and a pen at the other. But I am haunted by the image of the sufferings of my own class. I can lay this ghost, for a day or two, if I set my thoughts on the damnable torture and wholesale slavery of my class in Russia, or on its misery in Austria: but what is the good of a day or two? Or I can start on the lines of Matthew Arnold's "Consolation." My class is down: yes, but another class is up. I do not get far on these lines: for the classes that are up have not yet grasped the idea of the redemptive power of money. But things will mend: and the most that my class can do, is to wait and work for their mending.

IV

CATCH-WORDS

WE say of a voluble speaker that he has words at his command. It might be truer to say that they have him at theirs. He is their servant, who ought to be their master: he is conscious that he is using them, not conscious that they are using him. But this cumulative power of a long series of words is less remarkable than the individual power of isolated words. For there are words that we cannot put into words. They are in our life as the stars are in the sky: words of the first magnitude, and the Pole-star word that guides all of us; and familiar constellations, the Great Bears and Orions of language; and a whole Milky Way of adjectives and adverbs, and mere star-dust of prepositions.

But this comparison will not hold. Words, in our life, are not stars in the sky, but candles in a draught. They flicker and flare, they throw vague shadows about the room. Their power is inconstant; it comes and goes; we cannot foretell the shiftings of it. That is why we talk of catch-words. They have power, but it does not endure. They wait their opportunity, they look out for their

chance. They range from the transient slang of the day to the popular phrases which decide a general election—catch-words, all of them, self-appointed fishers of men, casting their nets round us. Years ago, at Sennen in Cornwall, I watched a take of pilchards; the moving stretch of darkness under the waves, as the shoal came inland; the huer on the hillside, shouting and signalling to the boats; the great seine-net drawn across the bay, and closed; thousands and thousands of pilchards ladled-up, with baskets and buckets, till the huge barges were down to the water-line with fish. That is what happens to us, when we swim into the net of a catch-word. It seems to us, while we are outside it, a very fragile, harmless, indefinite fabric, which has drifted our way by accident, not by design; we play round it, knocking-up against the shadowy meshes, and they yield to a touch: but we find ourselves caught before we know where we are.

To make a list of outstanding catch-words, prejudice and ignorance must lend a hand. Philosophers refuse to make it: they know too much, they are too high above prejudice. Here is my list, at random, six words—Democracy, Labour, Peace, Militarism, Reconstruction, Internationalism. It shows up, on the clean page, as a fool's waste of ink. Besides, as Mrs. Weir says, "Keep me, my dear! This is poleetical. Ye must never ask me anything poleetical." But what is not political? And are they

not catch-words? Democracy, when it implies that one class is Demos more than another; Labour, when it implies that labour is separable from work; Peace, when it tempts us to think of peace without thinking of war; Internationalism, when it tempts us to think lightly of our own country. The two remaining words are hardly less ambiguous. But how did I come to leave out Proletariat from my list?

MILITARISM.

If only we had a Who's Who of words, and their derivations.* *Miles*, a soldier: but why does *mil-* denote soldiering? Because, Varro says, a Roman regiment was *mille*, a thousand men. The soldier is a man in a thousand. I have often thought it of him. Note the degeneracy, the change for the worse, from *miles* to *militarism*—unhappy word, alien to our language. It has been *agent provocateur* to entrap us. It is played-out now: and the sooner it is forgotten, the better.

* "A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages,—may not be able to speak any but his own,—may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood, at a glance, from words of modern canaille; remembers all their ancestry, their inter-marriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national noblesse of words at any time, and in any company." *Ruskin: Sesame and Lilies*.

Militarism and Superman are the last of the great line of German words naturalised as British subjects and introduced into our literature by Coleridge, Carlyle, and Matthew Arnold. Some day, the line will begin again, with representatives more honourable to Germany. Militarism was over-worked, in the evil years before the War, as an epithet *ad invidiam* against our prophets; and, by a turn of thought, against the enforcement of law and order: "Prussian militarism," if the police hit out at a brutal crowd. Moreover, the word helped to persuade some of us not only to think lightly of the Army, but to think of the Army without thinking of the Navy. We are wiser now. But in the days before The Day, indifference to the Navy, and civilian conceit toward the Army, were two of our national sins.

During the War, we did not hear much of the old belief that nations, as nations, are punished for their sins. We were properly sure of the righteousness of our cause: we were not in the mood to imagine that the War had been "sent to punish us," had been inflicted on us by "an angry God." But no religion can rid itself absolutely of some sort of belief in national punishment. Our phrases for it are childish and grotesque: we cannot measure the principles of individual, let alone national, punishment: but there the belief is, logical or illogical.

This was not the least of our pre-War sins, that we

despised "the common soldier." Pre-War is an ill-defined term: I am thinking a long way back: the sin was old and habitual. We dressed him as if we were mad—tight skimpy lobster-jacket, stifling collar, long black insect legs, silly brimless little cap—a suit of clothes for a man with neither brain nor heart, neither lungs nor bowels. We neglected his health: we put him in overcrowded and badly ventilated barracks, and he died of consumption. He was ill-paid, his uniform was excluded from theatres, he was shunned as a fellow-traveller, he figured in caricatures and comic valentines, and was in every pantomime as the clown's victim. Let him go and get drunk, round the corner, where we shall not see him. We were in love with business, and with the idol that we called Peace. We were so proud of discovering the rights and the wrongs of the working man, that we failed to discover the rights and the wrongs of the fighting man.

Some trace of this vulgar contempt for the common soldier, even after the South African War, was in us up to 1914, when he set to work not only to save us, but to shame us. In the light of 1914-1918, our former insolence has the unmistakable hangdog look of a sin found out. Militarism, as a word of party-politics, went to its grave on the day when we buried the common soldier in Westminster Abbey. But if, or when, after many years of what we call Peace, we relapse, this devil will come back into us.

RECONSTRUCTION.

"Whatever you write about," somebody said to me, "don't write about reconstruction." She was tired of the monotony of the word. Before the War, everything was at the cross-roads: during the War, everything was in the melting-pot: after the War, everything was waiting for reconstruction. It was more than a word: it was a solemn league and covenant. But the exaltation of words does not save them from offhand use: none of them is inviolable.

It is no disgrace to us, that we were anxious to help the Lord to build-up Zion: but we were unduly confident of our ability to help: and our ambitious talk was concerned more with the name of reconstruction than with its nature. Reconstruction is incessant movement, incessant creation. Everything is on the run, and no man goes down twice into the same stream. All the way from here to the ultimate stars and beyond them, nothing is the same for two moments together. Every creature, seed, blade of grass, drop of water, grain of dust, is changing and shifting its constituent atoms: and every atom is a whirling system of myriads of less than atoms. Everything is everlasting, because nothing is permanent. Mr. Babbage, the inventor of the calculating-engine, says that the vibrations of the blow struck by Cain when he murdered Abel

are still going on, somehow, somewhere. None of us can stir so much as a finger or a nerve-cell without upsetting everything. If I do but sneeze, the Universe has to be reconstructed. It made me sneeze; and my vibrations rebounded into illimitable space, and were lost among the stars, but not annulled.

As with physical, so with political reconstruction. If the stirring of my finger affects, as it certainly does, the balance of the Universe, no less do I affect the balance of Europe when I subscribe, or refuse to subscribe, five shillings to the League of Nations Union. It is terrible, to be thus responsible to interstellar space and Europe: I must find some intelligible meaning in my omnipotence, some practical use for it. My only chance here is to drop into myself. The Universe and Europe are old enough to be trusted out of my sight.

All talk of reconstruction cried aloud that we must make an effort. Every newspaper hurled this text at us, and preached on it. We must set our teeth, be grim and resolute, shoulder our burden, fulfil our destiny. Indomitable, stalwart, indefatigable—these crashing adjectives thundered at us. But I am not We. Through all the din about Us, I heard the individual Mrs. Chick telling the individual Mrs. Dombey to make an effort. Mrs. Dombey could not; she was dying, and she drifted out of the clutch of Mrs. Chick's advice: the history

of Dombey and Son begins where she leaves off. If she had made an effort, and had got well, every constituent figure in the book would have been shifted, would have behaved otherwise.

But none of us can shift nations, or make them behave otherwise. The newspapers, with that impudent plural, had no message for the individual man or woman. There is a line of Hesiod—*ἔργα νεῶν, βούλαι τε μεσῶν, εὖχαι τε γερόντων*—that is to say, The works of the young, and the counsels of the middle-aged, and the prayers of the old. But this or that man, getting old, past the works of the young, not in the counsels of the middle-aged, and unable to believe that he can advance international politics by praying for them, is not of much use. Now and again, he will be of some passing influence, in a little sphere so close round him that it is rather a shell than a sphere. He will be thrifty of argument; he will handle silence, as a weapon, with adroitness. There will be moments when the young take his advice over their works; when the middle-aged refer to him some point in their counsels; when he forgets his age in a touch of unexpected sympathy with new causes: but that will be all.

It is absurd to talk to him about clenched teeth and iron wills. He is content to believe—not without misgivings—that there are men of supreme authority, men in highest office, to be, if they can,

the surveyors, architects, masons, carpenters, artists of the building-up of Zion, when the plans and the estimates have been put through. He is none of them: besides, he will be dead before the foundations are well and truly laid. He is conservative, not constructive: re-conservative, not reconstructive; his only job is not building, but the occasional mending of bits of second-hand furniture, just to make them hold together, for a few regular customers: and he prefers to work alone, in a very small shop, in a very small way.

A man like that, the more he hears of reconstruction, the more he thinks of self-reconstruction. There is nothing to be done for him, except to leave him, where he desires to be left, in his shell.

PROLETARIAT.

I wish that I could be sure of living to see this horrid word dead at my feet. What is it here for? Whom does it please? Why does it end in a rattle of syllables that no other word, except commissariat, ever makes? It is a word of contempt and class-hatred. It has taken advantage of our ignorance of Latin; it has played on our weakness for long words; it has crept into favour with many of us who cannot translate it, but think that a word so unusual is bound to be significant.

This villainous word is of great age: it has had time

to repent. *Proletarius*, says the dictionary, "According to a division of the people by Servius Tullius, a citizen of the lowest class, who served the state not with his property, but only with his children (*proles*)."¹ It appears that he might have a little money: he might have up to *mille quingentum æris*—whatever that may be—but he did not serve the state with it; only with his children. I, more happy, am not of the lowest class: for I serve the state, mostly under compulsion, with my property. So soon as I am brought down to *mille quingentum æris*, I shall serve the state only with my children. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, my wife and I have done that.

But Servius Tullius, half-legendary figure—Rome, in his time, a rough little tribal settlement; Latins on hillocks, over against Sabines on hillocks; raids across the little valley for the capture of Sabine women; each new-born male regarded, in double sense, as a crying necessity; each new-born female, as a disappointment—his division of the clansmen is out of date. I long to know the subsequent history of this word. It soon became obsolete: it was a legal term, a curiosity of grammar. Did it sleep for more than two thousand years, from Servius Tullius to the French Revolution? Perhaps it slept through that Revolution. There are words that can sleep through anything. Why is it awake now, stretching its clumsy syllables, and thrusting

its way into the columns of the newspapers? It is like some fossil monster, come back to life, waddling down Fleet Street. What was Servius Tullius thinking of, to divide a man into his money and his children, and leave out his work?

The proletariat worked. It was the lowest class of citizens: but it was citizens, not slaves. It worked; it voted; it threw well-deserved stones at Tarquinius Superbus; it demanded tribunes. Later, it was the crowd that is scolded and humoured by Menenius in the opening scene of *Coriolanus*, by Flavius and Marullus in the opening scene of *Julius Cæsar*. The carpenter, the cobbler—we should fare ill without their work. Servius Tullius seems to have overlooked this form of state-service.

The proletariat, in his sense of the word—and that is the only sense which it ever had—is those men and women who are doing nothing for the country, except that they breed. It follows, that the working man is not a proletarian: for he serves the state with his work: besides, he serves it with his money. If I restrict the output of my work, I may for a time serve my own class: if I evade my share of income-tax, I may for a time serve my own interests: but in neither way am I serving the state; I am cheating it, and I am degrading myself.

As things are now, it is hard to see how they, who serve the state with their children only, do it

much service. To abandon this word, would improve, not impoverish, the beauty of our language. Down with proletariat and proletarian. They are even worse than bourgeoisie and bourgeois. There is no meaning in them now, apart from contempt: let us drive them out of use.

A sort of parlour-game might be played, not more stupid than other such games. Pencils, and half-sheets of notepaper; and name the chief catch-words of to-day. It is hardly possible to foretell what will be laying hold on us, in the sea of politics, ten years hence: still, one of the newspapers might start a competition, a guessing-contest, with a prize for the best list of Coming Catch-words. Perhaps the list would contain some words of more nobility than those which now surround us. No word is too grand to lend itself to this purpose. But the really grand words are so vast that we never feel that they are capturing us. They permit us to remain at large, swimming free in our native element. It is the words of less nobility which are set to nip and imprison the shoal, and to haul it up to be ladled into the barges.

BOSTON M.F.

MAR 20 1923

V

HE, SHE, AND IT

INTO my head, with the beginning of this essay, came the verse, "So the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and like a giant refreshed with wine." The essay is old stuff; I have written it again and again: but the verse leaped at me with the quickness of a circus-dancer coming through a paper hoop: and it will take me some time to explain what brought it there.

I had been thinking back to the days when the doctrine of evolution so possessed us that we applied it to everything. Our favourite example, of course, was our own living bodies. The arrangement of the hairs on my skin, the modelling of my ears, the adaptation of my limbs, the expression of my emotions—all had been evolved. But here and there, in the completed fabric, were vestiges, remnants, leavings from some far-off ancestry common to man and the higher apes. The adjustment of my thumbs was admirable: no ape could hold a pen as I could, or play scales: but my coccygeal bones were degenerate, ill-shapen, as it were a rude little cairn in memory of a tail: and my appendix was a

shrunk relic that gave me trouble. Thus, my body was not all progressive: some of it was retrograde. I was in the position of a man of refinement, a modernist, who must have in his house unsightly pieces of furniture, left to him.

It was all true, everlastingly true. There was the consummate proof of it, in the human brain. The proportions, convolutions, microscopical structure, physiological virtues, pathological vices, of my brain are those—with no insuperable difference—of the brain of a chimpanzee. The authority of the ape's brain over the ape's muscles is the authority of my brain over my muscles. All reflexes, calculated movements, sensations, passions, which the ape's brain permits to the ape, are those which my brain permits to me. The two brains, made of one stuff, quickened by one life, hark back to one set of ancestors.

The doctrine of evolution told us all this, right away: told it with power and with magnificence. Later, the doctrine was extended, beyond the structure and the life of individual creatures, to the structure and the life of communities: to our laws, customs, governments, religions, arts—evolved, all of them. Thus applied to the collective affairs of mankind, it became vague and wordy: less fact and more formula. Herbert Spencer set himself to interpret the Universe as evolved: and his written works are justly called monumental. But I am

thinking of the founders and teachers of the doctrine as it was first delivered to all nations.

Power and magnificence were in it: and wonder and terror. What made it terrible? Two names of incomparable splendour stand together in the world's record: Darwin and Pasteur. Why could we not, straight off, thank Heaven for Darwin, as we did for Pasteur? Why did the new learning raise such a storm of hatred and fear?

It was not that we hated, or deeply resented, the notion of an arboreal ancestor with tufted ears and a prehensile tail. We pretended to be shocked, when we were introduced to him: but we were not really shocked. The adventure had its comical side. A rich vein of amusement was laid bare: it yielded inexhaustible material for jokes and riddles and caricatures. "The missing link" served as a nickname, or as a costume for a fancy-dress ball. There was much vague talk—"Well, I call it a disgusting idea," or again, "I suppose he wouldn't say so if he didn't honestly think so." There was a spectacular play, called Babil and Bijou, in which the missing link appeared in a ballet, and made the hit of the evening. We were not frightened at the descent of man. Rather, it indulged our proper pride, that *homo sapiens*, in us, had come so far. Besides, it enabled us to imagine that we were as good as our betters.

A more serious matter, for quiet people of settled

belief and sensitive conscience, was the victory of the new learning over the old Biblical tradition. For some of them, it was a miserable time. But nobody can understand it, who was not there when it happened: their orthodoxy and their misery alike belong to the past. Besides, though they hated to see the Bible "tampered with," and these filthy first parents substituted for the beloved figures of Adam and Eve, it would be going too far to say that they were terrified. The bitterness, the hardship, of the new learning were deeper than that; too deep to be exhibited in off-hand talk.

It was the horrible fear that the differences between us and the chimpanzee were all of them accidental, none of them essential. We had believed that they were somehow reconciled in God; that they stopped when they got to God, but not before; now, they stopped when they got to a beast with tufted ears and a tail. We did not mind being of one flesh and blood with the chimpanzee: but we did mind being of one substance with the chimpanzee, in the ultimate sense of that word. Not my body alone, but my soul, myself, I, had been evolved. The Universe was a natural product: so was I: alas! and so was the chimpanzee; the same origin for both of us, and the same end: no hope for me of anything but here and now. This fear, of course, is nothing new; it is as old as the hills;

but Haeckel, who sold furiously in a sixpenny translation, rubbed it in, and made it hurt.

As was the storm on the night of Cromwell's death, so was the storm over the death-bed of Biblical authority: the dislodging of tiles and the rattling of windows of little shanties where timid folk were sitting, with the blinds down, saying that it would soon be over. To present youth, it was over long ago: the name of Darwin is hardly less remote from them than the name of Galileo: but I can remember hearing Dean Burgon, in Oxford, more than forty years back—"Darwin! The time will come when you will spew that man's teaching out of your mouths"—surely, the most feeble straw that ever showed which way the wind was blowing: more than a wind: it was a storm raging and wrecking through all the land.

Slowly, as it wore itself out, and things became quieter, and the air was cleared, we recovered confidence. The voice of Philosophy began to be heard: it had been there all the time, but inaudible during the worst of the thunder. "Do you really believe," she said—her voice is ever soft, gentle, and low; with a slight German accent, but not like Haeckel's—"do you really believe that your body and you are nothing more than two words for the same thing? Indeed and indeed, they are not. How could they be? Don't think me silly: I'm only asking you to wait a little. There cannot be any harm in that."

So graciously and so pleasantly she reasoned with us, that we took her advice, and found it profitable. We began to feel sure, more or less—what is called fairly sure, or practically sure—that the extremists of the doctrine of evolution had invaded a country which did not belong to them. Under this invasion, the fact of self had gone down, but had not gone out, nor been explained away. We could still hope, or half-hope, to stand on some of the old ways, make use of some of the old phrases, touch the garment of an old faith: it might slip through our fingers, yet not be altogether imaginary: we began to believe, or half-believe, in a system of thought beyond the range of anatomy and physiology and embryology—even beyond the range of psychology—intended for us, for our very own.

That is how the verse came into my head, about the Lord awakening as one out of sleep. Philosophy, who is one of the finest ladies in the land, had refused to be frightened by the natural sciences: she had given them a bit of her mind.

That good little book, a primer of philosophy for juvenile readers, has not yet found an author. We have primers, elements, outlines, and so forth, of everything else: but none, I think, of philosophy. Perhaps it is waiting till it can decide on a title: whether *Metaphysics Made Easy*, or *The A B C of the Absolute*, or *The Boy's Own Being*. Perhaps

it is waiting till we are rid of the notion that philosophers are dreamy, elderly men, untidy in their ways. The writer of the book ought to be a motherly woman, or a masterful young school-mistress disdainful of pretences. Either of them could be trusted to make short work of long words; to air the rooms and scrub the floors and clean the windows and polish the mirrors and empty the rubbish-cupboards of the house of thought. There would be accidents: some valuable arguments would be broken, some facts would be thrown away: but the house, after the turning-out, would be delightful.

Nor do I doubt that boys and girls would enjoy to find their way about it: though it is confusing, with rooms opening into each other, and crooked passages, and rambling staircases. It has been through centuries of change, pulling down here, adding on there. As for the foundations of the house, nobody knows how old they are.

For it is founded and built on I am I. All that we imagine of deity, all that we admire in humanity, rests on this foundation. If it be not true, really and truly and eternally true, that I am I, nothing is true, nor ever was, nor ever will be.

Examine I am I with every test that you can devise. Try to get round it, or past it, or to put it differently. When you have tried and failed, as fail you will, then take it for granted, and see what comes next.

To your surprise, what comes next is a counter-

blast that almost knocks you off your feet. You had not expected it. You had fancied that I am I is no more open to criticism than Twice two is four. You forgot that Twice two is four is a mathematical statement, and everybody believes in mathematics: but I am I is a metaphysical statement, and everybody does not believe in metaphysics.* If you insist on talking them you must face the counterblast: here it comes.

Are babies aware that they are they? Did you begin to be you before birth, or at birth, or after birth? Can a man under chloroform, or dead drunk, or insensible from injury or disease of the brain, tell himself that he is he? And the man who dreamed that he was his own luggage on the top of a cab—which of them was saying I am I, he or the luggage? And the madman who thinks that he is somebody else, or that he is made of glass, what

* Of course, all mathematical statements may also be regarded as metaphysical statements: for our ideas of number and proportion are metaphysical ideas. See Boswell's Johnson (ed. 1835), pt. xxxii. "There was a Mr. Mortimer, a shallow, vulgar man, who had no sense of Johnson's superiority, and talked a great deal of flippant nonsense. At last he said, that 'metaphysics were all *stuff*—nothing but vague words.' 'Sir,' said Johnson, 'do you know the meaning of the word *metaphysics*?' 'To be sure,' said the other. 'Then, Sir, you must know that two and two make four, is a metaphysical proposition.'—'I deny it,' rejoined Mortimer, ''tis an arithmetical one; I deny it utterly.' 'Why, then Sir,' said Johnson, 'if you deny that we arrive at that conclusion by a metaphysical process, I can only say, that *plus in unâ horâ unus asinus negabit, quam centum philosophi in centum annis probaverint.*'"

sort of him is he? And when we are dead and buried, what sort of us are we? And the lower animals—are any of them able to say to themselves I am I; and if so, which? You can say it now: but there was a time when you could not: and the time is coming when you will not. Your precious phrase is nothing more than a moment of consciousness. And what is consciousness? It is a succession of states of consciousness.

Never you mind: stick to I am I. For two reasons: one, that you cannot get away from it: the other, that your opponents' logic is at fault. As if there could be a succession of states, without somebody on the spot, all the time, in whom they could be successive! Imagine a series of numerals on a blackboard saying "I am a sum": or sixty consecutive minutes saying "I am an hour": or sixteen one-ounce packets of chocolate saying "I am a pound of chocolate": or a bedstead, a washstand, a dressing-table, and a wardrobe, saying "I am a set of bedroom furniture." When you have imagined all these, then, and not till then, you will be able to imagine a succession of states of consciousness saying "I am I."

Besides, our states of consciousness are not simple or single things. Even our most commonplace experiences are a dozen things rolled into one: and it is certain that things cannot roll themselves, of their own accord, into one. Somebody must be

there, for that purpose. A spoonful of soup, for example, is a blend of experiences of colour, smell, flavour, touch, temperature, and so forth. But these diverse experiences cannot blend themselves into one of their own accord. They cannot do anything without you, they cannot even be anything. It is you, who experience them, combine them, and "realise" them as a spoonful of soup. And you could not do that if you were a succession of states of consciousness. You do it because you are you, on the spot, all the time.

No self, no soup. Nothing but "antecedent conditions" or "permanent possibilities of sensation." These, whatever they may be—if you can rightly call them anything—are not soup. Not so much as a spoonful, without you to make it a matter of fact, a "reality." Colour, smell, flavour, are not waiting for you ready-made. Even if they were, they could not put themselves together. Apart from you, they are "possibilities." In you, by you, they are put together as a spoonful of soup.

Over this homely instance, you will have no difficulty in sticking to I am I. The difficulty is with instances of bewildering beauty and majesty: a wood in summer-time, a wintry sea at high tide, the stars on a clear night. If I had said, straight away, "You are the measure of all things: not only do you belong to the Universe, but the Universe

belongs to you"—well, you would have said something which I will not repeat. So I began with a homely instance. But where can you draw the line? Between the soup and the wood, or between the wood and the stars, or where? It will vanish as fast as you draw it. Endless beauty of the wood, multitude of the stars, you admire, and are proud of admiring. I pray you, in common decency and common sense, give no less admiration to the soup. It is just as remarkable as everything else in the Universe. Besides, the beauty of the wood, and the majesty of the stars, are in you: it is you, who "realise" them: it is in you that they are beautiful and majestic.

So far, so good. We cannot get down to things as they are in themselves, apart from us. I tremble to think what Oxford Circus would be like, if it were not "realised." What would become of the colours in the shop-windows, the noise of the traffic, and the smell at the corner of Argyll Street? Without these, Oxford Circus, whatever it might be in itself, would not be Oxford Circus.

But you still have to face the most formidable of all arguments against I am I. You have to face the overwhelming mystery of the lower animals. Is it possible to doubt that we can observe, in them, the evolution of consciousness, the evolution of self, gradually coming on, all the way, from the lowest animals up to us, who are the highest? Surely,

we can discern, somewhere between earthworms and fishes, what we call the dawn of it. Surely the evidence, at last, cries aloud, that the higher animals, with nervous systems like ours, are conscious, are selves, as we are: that they love and hate and remember and think and plan. In brief, consciousness is a finishing touch given to those nervous systems which have earned it; a good-conduct prize awarded to life for being so lively. As Bastian said, more than thirty years ago—he could hardly have put it worse—“Consciousness is of the nature of an epiphenomenon.” That is to say, it is of the nature of something apparent added to something already apparent. For example, if you keep the poker in the fire till it is red-hot, the poker and the fire are phenomena, but the red-hotness of the poker is an epiphenomenon.

You and your formula seem to be up against all creation: you are David, with a pebble in your sling, opposed to a legion of Goliaths. What is to be done? You cannot throw away I am I: for it is yourself: you cannot even modify it, or hedge over it. There is nothing to be done: nothing, but to hold-on patiently. For you are face to face with colossal difficulties.

What do we know, really know, of animals? What has anybody known, really known, of them, from the earliest legends to the latest sciences? Adam when he named them, Noah when he marched

them into the Ark, Jacob when he practised on them, Moses when he legislated for them—have we got much farther? We guess at them, use them, reward and punish them, are fond of them, praise our virtues in them, and are blind to our sins in them: we are sure that we understand them, and they us: but we do it all by instinct, not by insight. We have not more than Homer's knowledge of dogs and horses, Virgil's knowledge of bees. We are not getting on. Our men and women of science, our naturalists, physiologists, psychologists, are not in the secret. There is no revelation, either in science or in religion or in poetry, of the inner life of animals. We touch Heaven—Novalis again—when we lay our hands on a human body: but we touch we know not what, when we feed a hen or scratch a pig or stroke a cat.

Take the questions which are thrust on us by children: set aside the letters in newspapers—"Do animals reason?"—the pretentious letters, about remarkable sagacity, which are like notes jotted down by some primitive man in his cave—take the children's questions: they expect a straight answer. "Why do moths fly into lamps? Does it hurt a worm, when you put it on a hook? How much does it hurt? Do the birds really think that the scarecrow is a man? Has my rabbit got a soul? If the cat loves its kittens, why did it eat one of them? Why does the hen make that funny noise when she has

laid an egg?" Religion and Science, wandering among these questions, would die of exhaustion, hand in hand, like the Babes in the Wood: and the children would only ask, Were the robins, that covered the Babes with leaves, really sorry for them?

It appears that we are held between two mysteries: between the animals, and I am I. The reconciliation of these mysteries is not within our range. It does not reconcile them, to say that they are two aspects of the one mystery of existence: they are too urgent on us for that. Nor does it help us, to brandish our ignorance of the inner lives of animals as if it were an argument in favour of ourselves. Ignorance is our shield, not our sword. We cannot use it as a weapon of attack against the evidence that some of the higher animals are conscious, are selves.

None the less, I know that self cannot be a succession of states of consciousness. Though it is evident that some animals are, as we are, the measure of all things; that they realise their world, as we realise ours; that the spiritual influences which are part of each of us are somehow part of each of them—I still fling back from the sub-human creation to my own. *J'y suis, j'y reste*. I stick to I am I, not as a bare phrase of logic, but as a confession of faith. *Credo in me unum*. I believe in the eternal difference between self and not-self: between *him* or *her*, and *it*.

That is why He, She, and It is the heading of this essay. I was not thinking of

He, you know, was Jacky:
She, you know, was Kit:
And then there came the baby boy,
Whom everyone called It.

I was thinking of such Its as our clothing and fuel and food—especially, that spoonful of soup—and the weather, and the ground under our feet. Babies are not Its: for no It can ever become a He or a She. Once an It, always an It. The Hes and Shes, without the Its, would go-on being Hes and Shes, if they could go-on at all. But what would be left of the Its, without Hims and Hers to put them together and realise them?

I envy the gifted few of us, who take unaffected pleasure in the Hibbert Journal. It is too learned, too disputatious, for the likes of me: but one of my betters lent me a number of it. Lo and behold, there was an article advising me to leave-off thinking of God as Him, and to think of Him as It. I was still to say Him when I was inside a church; my emotional advancement was not to be neglected: but when I came home and was really thoughtful, I should find It a nicer word than He. I should be moving with the times: I should be in the swim of change. All the really thoughtful people were going to say It: so I should be, for the first time

in my life, fashionable. Was there ever such an article! I am not responsible for its italics: nor for the length of its words:—*

What, if it can be briefly expressed, is the change which is said to have taken or to be taking place? It is the *depersonalization of the theological conception and doctrine of God*. . . . This depersonalizing of God, this deanthropomorphization of God, if I may coin so terrible a word, has largely taken place already, and ought not to be feared and denounced as a denial of God. It is very far otherwise.

And the writer goes on to commend to us his belief in “the ever-presence and urge of a Vital Power, a Life Force, immense, eternal, manifesting itself in all creation and supremely in man.”

You see at a glance what has happened. He is so taken with the notion of this It, that he talks of It in language which turns It back again into Him. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*. The faster he strips Him of attributes, the faster he dresses-up It in them. The result may be stated thus: He=It=He. The article, like a kitten, runs round and round after its own tail. We are left with a com-

* “A light tax on words over three syllables: a heavy tax on words over four syllables: and on words over five syllables a totally prohibitory tax.” (*The Water-Babies*.) Happily, the heavier a word is, the less mobile it is. Deanthropomorphization would be terrible indeed, if it started rolling downhill; but no crowbar could start it. Nine syllables; five Greek, four Latin. *Anthropos* =man: *morphé*=image. With this clue, the word is open to further study.

fortable sense that He is only It, but It, happily, is He.

Look at the description of It. "The ever-presence and urge of a Vital Power, a Life Force," etc. These huddled metaphysical words, some with capitals, some without, are words for Him. What have they to do with It? How could an It have an urge? or be vital, or immense, or eternal? How could It, unless It were a self, manifest Itself? How could It make up Its mind to manifest Itself supremely in us, unless It had a mind? How could It tell the difference between me and the earth-worm?

Oh, this mindless It, *sans* thought, *sans* will, *sans* everything. Conscience, justice, pity, love, are in Us, but not in It. We have gifts which It neither has nor dreams of having. The least of little Hims or Hers is more vital, eternal, and immense than It. I feel quite equal to being the God of this It: but no amount of Hibbert Journals shall induce me to take this It for my God. "It is very far otherwise."

VI

I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE

WE must be careful, on our way through life, to show almost exaggerated courtesy to great words and phrases which have come down in the world. For instance, I have reason to believe—a phrase of noble birth and of the utmost refinement—is at the mercy of gossip. I have reason to believe that the conductor gave me sixpence short on purpose: that the So-and-sos are not as fond of each other as you might think: and so forth. Quick, let us do honour to this old phrase: for it is descended from two of the stateliest of all words.

To say that we have reason to believe, is to say that our reason, such as it is, creates and sustains our belief, such as it is. That is what reason is for; that we may believe. When the doctor says that he has reason to believe that an operation will be necessary, or when the policeman says that he has reason to believe that the prisoner was trying to steal the lead off the roof, we plainly see reason creating and sustaining belief. But what about religious belief? Surely it is created and sustained not by reason alone, but by desire and emotion and fancy. These do not sway the doctor and the

policeman. The doctor takes a dispassionate view of the case: and so does the policeman. That is because neither of them is deciding for himself. But religious belief is self deciding for self. Therefore desire and emotion refuse to be left out: and, under proper control, they ought to be admitted.

Self deciding for self is a lonely figure: you are all by yourself: it is good for you, but sometimes dull. You would be glad of a crowd. Belief is companionable: it does not thrive on solitude. But in the first movement of the mind toward belief, company is a luxury, not a necessity. You must go solitary to find your belief—whatever you may do later, when you have found it.

That is the natural course of all movements of the mind. Take for instance, the attainment of music. You start for it, because you desire it. You start alone, to get it by yourself: there is the discipline of scales and exercises, and book-learning, all to yourself: till desire has pulled you through, and you can read, play, and even write music. After that—later in purpose, if not in time—comes the enjoyment of music in company, at concerts and operas. But there is no loss, in this enjoyment, of individuality. A thousand listeners are enjoying the music together, because each of them is enjoying it apart. It was in each of them, before it is in all of them. Opera-house, concert-room, village hall, wherever it may be, music is a

heart-to-heart talk between the maker of it and the hearer of it: *Cor cordi loquitur*, though every seat in the house be filled.

Or take, for another instance, the beauty of a landscape. Years of individual discipline—you were not conscious of it, but there it was, enforced on you by your daily surroundings—these years of private education in light and shade and colour and outline and distance and contrast enabled you, at last, to enjoy the beauty of a landscape. Your enjoyment is individual, wherever you are, alone or not alone. Hampstead Heath, Box Hill, the top of the Rigi—you are in company. The sight-seers are enjoying the landscape together, but each of them is enjoying it apart: the sense of beauty was in each, before it is in all: and the landscape and yourself are having a heart-to-heart talk, in strict confidence, though a crowd is there, and the foreground littered with scraps of newspaper.

Blessings on this rule of our nature, that isolation takes precedence of association. What is worth having, unless we can have it all to ourselves, company or no company? The best of company may fail to heighten our power of enjoyment; may even depress it. A crowd cannot increase the beauty of the world: and I most enjoyed the overture to the *Meistersinger* on a day when I was passing Queen's Hall, and they were rehearsing, and I found an open window, and was the entire audience.

As with these movements of the mind, so with its movement toward religious belief. Self is deciding for self. Therefore, self must go alone, at first. It will be helped on its way, or hindered, by desire, and emotion, and fancy; by authority; by conflict between authorities; by good or bad companionship and example. It will make innumerable mistakes; and will correct them as it goes. It will not get very far: nothing like all the way. But, so far as it does get, it will have reason, right or wrong, to get there. The average mind, the mind of A or B or C, is the "reasonable soul" of each: individual and isolated, whether it be alone or in the company of other letters of the alphabet.

I know A fairly well. He was born more than twenty years ago: and, of all days in the year, on the first of April. It is not the day that one would choose for that purpose. I would have chosen St. John Baptist's day—whenever that is—for I greatly admire him, except when I look at M. Rodin's naked figure of him. We might with equal justice have a naked figure of Plato, Shakespeare, or Pasteur. Thought and clothes are inseparable. That is why the young man in the Bible story, when the devils had been cast out of him, was found "clothed and in his right mind." It is only madmen who take off their clothes to emphasise their convictions:

like poor Solomon Eagle, who went naked about London during the Great Plague.

I find in my calendar that no saint is responsible for what happens on the first of April. Besides, A was not a fool. His parents had no anxieties on that score: for he was their child. Therefore, knowing that his mind would enlarge itself, they and Nurse were careful to take seriously, so far as they could, that small bundle of fears and fancies, the children's first idea of God. Hands off the dear little fetish. That was the rule, the wise policy of non-interference. For, as ages and stages of evolution are lived through and obliterated in the development of the embryo, so image after image of God is lived through and obliterated in the development of the mind: or, as Nurse put it, more simply, "It comes natural to young children, to think like that."

To the children, at first, God was somebody watching them: especially, when they were in the dark, or where they ought not to be. He was sorry, or angry, when they were naughty: was pleased when they were good: knew what they were thinking: and would make them good, if they prayed for it. He could not be any sort of woman: therefore, must be some sort of man: very, very old, as they could see for themselves in the photograph downstairs, where Adam is lying on the ground: a wonderful man, who made the flowers, and had even

made the stars, and could make people well when they were ill.

So far as he can remember, A thinks that he felt no interest at this time, or next to none, in our Lord. He learned to repeat "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild": but the words "Pity my simplicity" shaped themselves in him as "Pity mice and plicity." He could understand pity for mice, and was content not to understand plicity. Now and again, he caught the name of somebody, or something, that they called the Holy Ghost. Talking to me lately of his childhood, he said with sudden impatience, "That name ought never to have been invented. It ought to be dropped. What is the use of it? And all the while, we've got the right word, spirit: there's taking things in a proper spirit, and so on. Think of us in the nursery, frightened of ghosts, and then to be told of the Holy Ghost." Doubtless, he was right in his contention, that small children are bewildered by the name. One of my grandchildren, on his way home from church, said "Mummy, I believe it was the Holy Ghost who was playing the organ."

By the time when he was seven or eight, A was remodelling his first image of God; not on purpose, but as it were by instinct. He was observing in himself, with vague curiosity, impulses and moods; he was beginning to take notice of his reasonable soul, and to play with his thoughts as in the cradle

he had played with his toes. The image, accordingly, began to show signs of more thoughtful work. The nursery attributes—the face and hands, the robe, the appearances and disappearances, the voice, the detective cleverness—were not explicitly denied, but were not asserted. The image remained human, but was more of a soul and less of a body: and he spoke of the majestic figure in the photograph, not as God, but as a picture of God. But he still attributed to Him passing moods, and changes of intention, such as he found in himself.

During the next few years, nursery surroundings began to yield to downstairs surroundings: and the influences of a preparatory school threaded their way through the influences of home. He began to listen more attentively to grown-up talk, to criticise his elders and his schoolfellows, and to try to study them. He was also possessed of a new sense—half-awake, half-asleep—that he was in “a mighty maze, but not without a plan.” Everything all round him was incessantly at work on him. It follows, that he was incessantly at work on his image. He was coming to regard himself as one of a community; a mixed lot, no two of them alike, but none of them shut out from some sort of plan for all of them; a well-meaning community, in a well-meaning world. There must be something beyond everything: something in touch, somehow, with him and the other boys, and his people at home,

and the world, to make them good. The accommodating image began to represent a mind and a will above caprice or temper.

Soon after his advancement from a preparatory school to a public school, it was time for his confirmation and first communion. They were just what he was wanting. They speeded-up his mind. Hitherto, it had been moving: now, it was moved. So much the better for him: the touch of emotion, of excitement, was opportune. Besides, he was touched not only with emotion, but with ambition to understand. He set himself to the doctrine of the Trinity. He could not lay hold on the use of the word Person. Everybody was a person; each of them distinct. Persons were persons. There he stopped.

In the house where I now chance to be, there is a huge old Bible, with a frontispiece, after Rubens, of the Trinity. The Father holds a sceptre; the Son holds a cross; they are seated on clouds, each with one foot on the globe of the earth; between them is the Spirit, as a dove. This gross, impudent, slovenly picture is a parody or caricature of what was in the boy's mind. He tried in vain to remodel the image so that it should represent, somehow, Three in One. He could not; he put that problem away from him. By this fortunate inability, he was free to give less attention to the metaphysics of religion, and more to its duties.

I do not regard his confirmation and first communion merely as a thrilling episode, a few days of self-interest. They were the point where he turned off his little grass-path into a wide road. He had, as it were, attained his majority, all of a sudden: he had been admitted where children are too young for admission. The original idea, that "the presence of God" was somebody watching him, gave place to a new idea, which he could not formulate in words, nor work into the image: still, he felt that a bundle, at this time, dropped off his back, and that his reasonable soul was in authority over him.

The years of early manhood were too crowded for precise description. "I suppose things deepened a bit," he says, "but they certainly got most awfully mixed." As youth will, he had started to handle grown-up things as if they were a razor. He found not that he was handling them, but that they were handling him. He had thought it easy to think: he found it impossible. The shock of things as they are—their beauty and goodness, their muddle and horror and ugliness and waste and pain—bewildered him: a great multitude of interests—arts and sciences, bodily desires, amusements, athletics, disputation, politics—chased him this way and that with big green butterfly nets: and the patient image waited till he should have leisure to give to it.

Then came the War: and here I leave him: for he does not care to talk of it, nor of his image as it now is: besides, I want to talk of mine. For many of us, the War has removed the boundary-marks of the only world in which we could feel ourselves at home; and we hardly know where we are. Think of a gentleman-doll, accustomed to a doll's-house, now compelled to live in a real house; his distress over the size of the rooms, the thunder of the knocker, the Alpine ascent of the stairs: "Put me back," he would cry, "in my doll's-house." Or think of quiet folk returning to a village—I have in mind Vassincourt, near Bar-le-duc, in the spring of 1915—all gone and lost, wrecked and undecipherable, that had been the body of their life. Some day, bricklayers and carpenters will arrive, and will run-up a new village: but Oh mon Dieu, Vassincourt is gone, and what are we still here for?

Things have changed: and I must adapt myself and my belongings in accordance with them. Among these belongings, is my image. I must so refashion it, that it shall represent God in the War. Surely, if I could do that, it would last me for the rest of my life. Something has got to be done. I cannot leave it as it was before August, 1914.

But if it is to be final, or anything like final, I must be the more careful, what I add to it, or take from it: I must keep my wits about me. It must

display those attributes, and those alone, in which I have reason to believe. To be illogical will not help me to be theological. I have no reason to believe that the War was "permitted"; that it was "allowed to happen." These are convenient words of piety, but they will never be more than words: they are not attributes, and they are worse than useless for the fashioning of the image.

Do what I will, it will be as nothing, because of my essential and immeasurable ignorance. I wish that the churches would invent, for each Sunday morning, a general confession of ignorance. (And I wish—but this by the way—that they would invent a public act of loyalty to the Sovereign, with a verse of the national anthem, year in year out, War or no War.) A general confession of ignorance would not help us out of our ignorance: but it would help us out of our ignorance of our ignorance. Therefore, it ought to be followed by a general thanksgiving for ignorance confessed; for the ability to feel our inability; for the vision of our want of vision.

By knowledge of my ignorance, I am saved from any crazy attempt to elaborate my image. It will not take the huge outlines of the War: it will not let me reduce them to scale, as it were a hundred miles to the inch, and engrave them on its surface. There is no room, on this diminutive effigy, for the affairs and the appointed destinies of the nations.

I cannot copy what I cannot survey; or model what I cannot measure.

Happily, I need not. Close under my hand, I have all that I want: for I have A. He, in the War—patient, honourable, self-forgetful—is all that I want. Seeing God in him during the War—as I clearly do—I see God in the War. It is one among legions of lives: but the legions do not prove more than the one. If I can get the effect of A, the look of him, I shall have my final image. Surely I can mould the likeness of this one life into it, with a touch. There: I have done it. I have made God in the image of man: a work of Christian art: and I have reason to believe that I have got, by this final touch, all that is possible for me.

VII

A NOTE ON LOYALTY

It is a fine thing for me, that I have lived all this time and have not once heard any Englishman or Englishwoman of my acquaintance say anything aggressively disloyal. Heaven keep me in this good luck to the end of my days. I have come across disloyalty in cold print: rightly described as cold, because it reduces the temperature of these red-hot sentences: they sizzle for a moment on the printed page, and cool rapidly. In "Joan and Peter" I came across a reference to Queen Victoria, so bad that I dropped the book to the floor: but I am thinking of disloyalty to the living, not of disloyalty to the dead. Again, I am thinking of unpaid disloyalty, not of paid: so I do not count the man who lately, in Portsmouth, cursed the King and the Constitution, and was duly arrested, and I hope that he is in prison. He may have been paid to shout. Besides, red-hot disloyalty, after all, is less wearisome than unctuous disloyalty, such as I smell in the hymn which says: "The people, Lord, the people: not crowns, O Lord, but men." Thank you kindly, Heaven, for letting me breathe, all

this time, the clean air of loyalty. And if it be said, by this or that half-baked thinker, that loyalty is a fool's paradise, the answer is ready to hand, that disloyalty may be a fool's hell.

From this prelude, I pass to my theme—the difference between loyalty half-a-century ago and loyalty now. But my theme refuses to be hurried: it insists on stopping to gossip with my Victorian memories.

Fifty-five years ago, "Ours" was produced at the Prince of Wales's theatre: and three names, dear to all Londoners—Marie Wilton, Squire Bancroft, John Hare—drew all London to it. In the second act, the hero went off to the Crimean War. I remember the scene; a big London drawing-room; the heroine fainting; the Russian prince—what was he doing, at such a moment, in a London drawing-room?—standing silent; Marie Wilton calling to him from the window, "Prince, prince, come and look at the soldiers"; and the music of the regimental band, as it went down the street, playing *The Girl I left behind Me*. There is always a regiment of us marching off to the tune of *The World I left behind Me*: marching with head up and chest out and eyes straight, to the drums and fifes. Yet I can hardly bear the parting: for oh dear me, how delightful she was, and how fond I was of her! The world I left behind me is the Victorian Age. I have, as it were on the mantel-

piece of my heart, a faded photograph of her: and I try in vain to describe to this or that young friend her charms and her virtues.

While the hero of "Ours" was in the Crimea, I was in the cradle: so I am one year older than Tennyson's Maud, and was born in the year when Colonel Newcome died. I am six years younger than Nelson's Column, eight years older than Kingsley's Waterbabies, ten years older than Landseer's lions, and sixteen years older than the Albert Hall: and I have lived to see Nelson's Column used for mob-oratory, and the Albert Hall for boxing-matches.

But I am on my guard, when I talk of the Victorian Age. I must not go outside the limits of truth: or my juniors will start whispering, "He happened to get the very best of it. He never saw it as it really was. Don't argue with him: let him talk: it is nice to find somebody believing in it." Especially, I must not say that any factor of its greatness was derived from Queen Victoria. They assure me that the attachment of her name to her times is a mere label, for the convenience of history.

Here they have some right on their side: but I will not admit that I have none on mine. It is childish, to compare the naming of an Age to the labelling of a parcel. We who belong to the Age, and are witnesses to it, gave it her name, even in her life-time, not to please history, but as loyal subjects, to please ourselves.

Loyal subjects—at the sound of this old-fashioned phrase, my juniors regard me as if I were a performing dog, sitting up once more to play Trust and Paid-for. “Now he’s off,” they say. Yes, but off at a tangent: for I am thinking of loyalty as I saw it lately, not as I saw it half-a-century ago: and am thinking, to my own surprise, that loyalty now has a reserve of strength which it then had not.

I have in mind two snapshot memories of the King. One, of an afternoon during a very dark time of the War. He was on his way back from some bit of the long day’s work; and he passed close to a few of us who were idling in Hyde Park. I have seldom seen a face more heavy with care and sorrow, more clearly aged by the War. It recalled to me, with unexpected vividness, the look of his father’s face on the day of Queen Victoria’s funeral. The other memory is of him on Armistice Day, going down to St. Paul’s; the crowd swirling and roaring all round him, close up to him, wild with happiness. They, and he with them, had come out of great tribulation. Brother, friend, fellow-sufferer; the King, by the Grace of God, which was in every day of his life’s work for them; he their head, their servant, their lover, their supreme representative before the whole world; he was the one man of all men on earth for them. I had often heard of “passionate loyalty”; and on Armistice Day I saw it.

We ought to be more sparing of this word "passionate." It is a word of tragedy. It should be used of great occasions only: not cheapened over commonplace interests and excitements, individual or collective. We were properly excited, on that day: but there was nothing in us that deserved to be called passion, till the King was with us.

It is not enough, to esteem loyalty as an affair of individual conviction, a habit of thought, a chosen point of view: it is not enough, to reckon a loyal crowd as a chance lot of us run together, each of us loyal. There are possibilities in a crowd which defy such reckoning. Latent power, by a touch, is set free. Loyalty, unrestrained and uncereemonious, flinging itself right up to him—the War, like a dynamo, had charged us, and he completed the circuit—had long been accumulating strength: it waited only for the hour and the man: and the hour that it waited for, was the last hour of the War.

If I were familiar with history, I would seek to maintain this argument, that loyalty, alike in the individual and in the nation, is at its best during, or just after, times of national affliction, peril, or sacrifice. It is at its best, when it is passionate. It must go uphill, to attain that height; it must have the discipline of a rough path. Adversity does more than prosperity for it. In the fat years of peace and plenty, it is too comfortable: it purrs like a cat on a hearth-rug. Our national virtues are *feræ naturæ* ;

they are not intended to be petted and coaxed with milk in a saucer.

The crowd round the King displayed what I would call the new loyalty—if the phrase be without offence. Old ceremony, and the immemorial tradition of distance between the Sovereign and the subject, vanished. He did not want them: he would not, on that day of days, be escorted past us down a kept and swept road: he must be in the very thick of the crowd, body and soul, for his delight and refreshment, now that the War was over. That is the secret of the new loyalty. It has touched, and can touch again, the passionate sense of brotherhood in suffering.

Loyalty, half a century ago, could not. The sense was not there to be touched. No such affliction, peril, and sacrifice, came on the nation, in all the sixty-three years of the Queen's reign, as came in 1914. Besides, the spirit of democracy had not begun to desire brotherhood with the Sovereign, nor even to dream of it. Besides, the Victorian Age was afraid of letting itself go: it dared not be passionate: it loved restraint and convention. Thus, the fashion of loyalty is changed: not perished, but changed.

The old loyalty was ceremonious, devout, remote; personal, rather than political. I write of it as I learned it from my father: he was the Queen's chief surgeon: but his loyalty was not

founded on that appointment. To enjoy loyalty came as natural to him as to enjoy music, or a walk, or his dinner: he would have reckoned all four enjoyments as "blessings"; would have praised God for them, as did Linnæus for the beauty of the gorse on Putney Common: would no more have bothered to ask why he should be loyal than Linnæus bothered to ask why gorse should be beautiful. That uncertain phrase, "natural religion," if it could ever have a meaning, might find one here. My father's loyalty was natural religion: and he enforced it on all of us at home. He was absolutely simple over it, and he was profoundly serious over it: and if he could have been compelled to give-up either his religion or his loyalty, he would have been hard put to it, to choose between them.

But here the half-baked thinker wishes to say a few words. He fears that the old loyalty was touched with superstition and with mysticism. Bless the man, it was none the worse for that. It was immensely alive: it was not manufactured in political laboratories, chemically pure, like synthetic quinine. As for mysticism, of course it was mystical: so is everything else. Then he says that it was flunkeydom, that it was Court flattery: he quotes the Book of Snobs: he derides Tennyson's poems to the Queen. Let us put the half-baked thinker back in the oven. Tennyson's poems were sincere

through and through: and, for a bit of loyalty in prose as good as poetry, we have what Lister said, just after the Queen's death—

If it were suitable to speak of loyalty of a Sovereign to subjects, truly we might say that the medical profession never had a more loyal friend than it had in Queen Victoria. . . . I believe that I happen to be the only person who ever exercised upon her sacred body the divine art of surgery. . . .

That was the way of the old loyalty. It spoke a language of its own, which is not often heard now. It lived in a world of its own, a little world of personal religion. It had its ikon in the individual heart, for habitual reverence, year in year out. The rest of the heart's furniture might be changed, broken, sold, shifted: but the ikon corner must always be the same, always there to turn to, and the votive candle or lamp must be lit now and again, for special occasions.

By this individualism, the old loyalty stood through the times of national resentment of the Queen's politics, and her withdrawal from public doings. Always, it could say, "I will not criticise Her Majesty, nor will I permit such talk in this house. I hope that I know my place too well for that." We preferred to feel immeasurable difference between her and us. We were all sorts and conditions of men and women. The Queen was the Queen: we were at a great distance from her: and the distance was marked-out by Heaven, not by us.

So we believed: so we behaved. Then came the later years of her reign: the advance from individual loyalty to national loyalty, the wonderful beauty of her first Jubilee, the Imperial splendour of her second Jubilee; and then her death, and the end of the Age. We have what Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Lytton Strachey have written of these events: good as good can be, every word of it. A grand thing for any man, to have been in those crowds. Yes, but an even grander thing, to have been in the crowd on Armistice Day.

Our loyalty to the Queen was interwoven with the settled magnificence of the Empire; with our accumulated wealth, our prosperity, our dominant hold on the world. Our loyalty to the King is interwoven with the peril of the Empire, with disaster and mourning, with terror and with misery, such as the nation had never yet suffered. He and we have been through it together, and have been delivered out of it together.

In June of this year, in Belfast, and on his return to London, he touched again, more quietly but not less intimately, the note of passionate loyalty. None of his Ministers can do that, nor all of them together. He can do it, because he is who he is. Neither politics nor casuistry have any say in this matter: we are concerned only with things as they are.

VIII

THE VICTORIAN AGE

JUNE 1, 1921: the day of the Derby: and the riband of highroad, this evening, between the fields and the common, is agitated by many cars and charabancs rushing back to London. We here bow low before the blast, in patient deep disdain: we let the legions thunder past. Oh, the joy, the luxury, of not going to the Derby. For, on this first evening of the month of roses, the country and the garden are too good for words. I must propitiate the Gods, lest they be angry at the perfection of my surroundings. But I have nothing that I can offer to them. It is impossible that they should care for an essay on the Victorian Age. Would Athene be interested in its learning, Apollo in its works of healing, or Hephæstus in its industrialism? I cannot write for the Gods: I will write for those lesser divinities, my grandchildren.

They will see the last of the distinctive miseries of this present time, and the coming of an age greater than the Victorian Age. Its gifts will be more equally distributed. There will be less drink, less poverty, a more adventurous faith, and a higher

level of national education, health, and efficiency. But there is no assurance that liberty and fraternity will come hand in hand with equality: no prospect of a more wonderful display of individual genius: and no likelihood of a more dutiful home-life.

What is in our minds, when we isolate a period of years, and call it an Age? What right have we to divide the continuous product of a nation's affairs, as if it were woven stuff? Imagine yourself buying, across the counter of History, a measured length of events, enough for a nice chapter. The pattern of the fabric does not repeat: you must be careful to get the piece that you want: just the years of the Queen's reign: a convenient length. "Thank you," says History, as she ties the parcel: "Can I show you anything else? Good afternoon." Does she keep shop like that, and sell by the yard what comes one and indivisible from the loom? To meet the requirements of her customers, she does. She acknowledges the occurrence of Ages: the arrival and the departure, in this or that nation, of greatness undesigned, if not undeserved.

Ages are more of heavenly arrangement than of human design. It is not in the power of a nation, to say "We are a mighty nation: let us have an Age." The making of Ages is one of the secrets which Heaven will not publish. The legend of Babel comes-in here: "Let us build us a city and a tower: let us make us a name." Heaven imme-

diately confounded their politics. The most that a nation can do, is to deserve an Age: it cannot order one from Heaven. What can it do, to deserve one?

Little is all that I know of earlier Ages: but I hazard a guess that the conditions which prepared the way for them were not unlike those which prepared the way for the Victorian Age. Perhaps it would be not far from the truth, to say that the coming of an Age is attended, to begin with, by general recognition of deliverance out of national peril, or by general reaction against national stupidity and inefficiency. Next, there is general desire for national betterment; for a fresh start, another chance, and the turning over of a new leaf. But this desire, if it is to come to anything, must have the advantage of a long spell of national prosperity. There must be a sense of quiet settlement, and of growing strength. Times of national strife and upheaval are favourable to individual heroism, but are unfavourable to the making of an Age. Peace and plenty must cater for it. That is why it flourishes; and that is why, later, it fails: because peace and plenty do not give it a proper amount of those "accessory food factors," those vitamins or ferments, which are essential to balanced health.

This well-kept garden here, productive, orderly, intimate, is an image of mid-Victorian society. It is trimmed and weeded and mown and rolled: but this convention does not make it less delightful.

It has an air of selfishness; it is politely exclusive; but the common is invading it, down one side, with a crowd of pushing bracken and sturdy foxgloves; and it receives them with acquiescence, even with good nature: but they must behave properly, in the long border which it has surrendered to them. It is taking its ease in the silence and the sunshine: but every blade of grass, leaf, petal, seed, is labouring and fighting to retain hold on life. That is how I see the Age. They who see it as a dead museum of ugly fashions, dull Sundays, heavy dinners, greedy trade, smug respectability, might as well complain of this garden that the larkspurs are too blue, the chestnut-leaves too green, the peonies too red. The glory of the garden it shall never pass away.

The Age had its faults: that is to say, it had ours. It took us as it found us. It found a measureless gulf between the classes and the masses, as they were then called: and this gulf was regarded, by many representatives of the classes, if not with complacency, yet without misgivings. There was a children's hymn—

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high and lowly,
And ordered their estate.

Still, on the whole, taking one home with another, the rich man and his children were as mindful of

the poor man, fifty years ago, when they came across "deserving poverty," as they are now, when the poor man is thundering at the gate, and the rich man is selling the castle: but mindful in a way of their own, calling it charity and pity. There is a flower which goes by the name of Love-in-a-mist. The goodwill of the classes toward the masses was love in a mist of sentiment. But we had prophets—Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley, Huxley, Morris—who despised sentiment, and would not let us play with it: and we listened to them. Right away from Carlyle, it was the Age of the Prophets. They and their disciples gave it the final touch of revolutionary splendour.

The revolution came so quietly, that the children of this generation hardly believe that it really did come. It slid down to earth like Iris on her rainbow. Its mission was to preach wisdom, not wreckage; and sympathy, not hatred. To that end it worked, and attained, through half a century of such changes that the pre-Victorian and post-Victorian periods are mere prologue and epilogue to them. Changes are not like events: they refuse to be dated. Mr. Lytton Strachey has said that by 1850 the Age "was in full swing." It is a good date: the year of Alton Locke, In Memoriam, Christmas Eve and Easter Day, and David Copperfield: and the Great Exhibition planned. But the Age, in 1850, was waiting for Darwin, Huxley, Lister, Miss Nightin-

gale, George Eliot, Rudyard Kipling, Stevenson, Millais, Henry Irving, Gilbert and Sullivan—it could not be in full swing, without them to help to swing it.

Prophets, men of science, poets, novelists, philanthropists, statesmen, made the Age memorable. What brought such a crowd of them together? They met as it were by appointment: they coincided, as if they were the musicians of an orchestra, or the guests invited to a party, or the actors of a play. What determined and ensured their simultaneous arrival? They made the Age brilliant: even the dullest of its critics must admit that it was brilliant. But why did so many brilliant men all start shining at once?

This question has escaped the notice of critics. They recognise the existence of the men of genius, but fail to be surprised at their co-existence. Why was genius so lavish of its presence? I venture a theory. Of course, not a theory of the nature of genius: only a theory of this concurrence of men of genius. Perhaps it is too simple to be of use: but so far as it goes, I think that it is in accord with facts.

At birth, one generation of children is much the same as another. Some of the children are of more promise, and some are of less promise. The proportionate number of promising children to the total

number of children hardly varies. The child-population, in the early years of the Queen's reign, was neither more nor less promising than usual: everything was normal. But the conditions of early Victorian home-life were unusually favourable to the steadying of the wills of promising children, the development of their abilities, the fulfilment of their promise. Therefore, in due time, the number of great men was abnormally high.

The home-life had a distinctive gift. I have been fumbling in my brain for the right word for it, and the best that I can find is Restraint: that is to say, the temperate well-directed use of all gifts. Restraint made itself felt in the art of living at home, as it makes itself felt in other arts: for example, in Greek sculpture, Mozart's music, and so forth. But no gift is quite safe in man's keeping: and the influence of restraint was cheapened, in not a few homes, by conventionality. That is why people now are shouting "Mrs. Grundy" after us.*

Restraint was not a set of rules imposed by heavy parents on submissive children: it was the spirit of all the household: it was more of a bond than a bondage. It did not waste itself over *You mustn't*: it was always saying *You must*. That is, you must be thoughtful, business-like, diligent: do the ordi-

* "GRUNDY, MRS., a fictitious personage who is supposed to control social proprieties. The name first appeared in a play by Thomas Morton, *Speed the Plough* (1798)." — *Nelson's Encyclopædia*.

nary things in the ordinary way: be on your guard against eccentricity, flamboyancy, perversity: work well in all sorts of surroundings, and with all sorts of people; and work hard, on the usual lines, with method, under discipline.*

These early Victorian parents had never heard of eugenics, nor of the continuity of the germ-plasm, nor of the Montessori system, nor of Freud and Jung, who sound so like Mutt and Jeff. They were even inclined, at one time, to believe in phrenology. They had no debating societies for the study of "the child": but they gave any amount of prayer and care to their own children. *What is the use of a baby, but to become a man?* The children were assiduously trained for that event. The home-life was not oppressive. It enforced work and obedience, but tempered them with holidays. It regarded children, not as young animals, but as immortal

* I remember my father saying to me, "You ought to try to work as much harder than other men, and be as much more virtuous than other men, as you can: but in everything else you ought to be exactly like other men." It was a time—this may be worth noting—of profound belief in competitive examinations, and in the cramming system. Fathers would even pray that their sons might do well in this or that examination. The announcement of each year's senior wrangler and senior classic was of more than local interest. Half-a-century ago, the importance of prizes and honours lists, at school or college, had not yielded to the importance of athletics. Cricket and football were still called games, or recreation, or, grimmest word of all, relaxation. See, for all this, *The Water-Babies*, chapter viii.

souls. It was circumspect, prudent, and invincibly, I had almost said incorrigibly, sane.

To use the word "sane" of this home-life, is to be reminded of the title of one of Lamb's essays—"Sanity of true genius." The Age was so sane that genius itself must behave with irreproachable sanity, if it wanted approval. Not even genius ought to shock people, or expect to have everything its own way, or kick against restraint. Pegasus would lose nothing of his divine nature by letting himself be harnessed. Genius, being sane, would fall into line with commonsense; would supply those articles which were in demand.

These conditions of home-life, though in a few cases they were adverse, yet were favourable, on the whole, to the saving and the developing of every scrap of promise in the children. Many of us knew some of the makers of the Age, in the years of promise fulfilled: more of us have read their written lives. In their boyhood and early manhood, they seem to be forming a group. Almost all of them had well-to-do parents, who saved them from the disabilities of poverty. Home was comfortable, with regular ways, and with elbow-room for each soul. Its furniture and upholstery were of a bad period: but the boy who was to be Ruskin, and his neighbour who was to be Browning, took no harm from the look of carpets and curtains: they had something better to think of. Indeed, it is possible

that "æsthetic" home-surroundings would have taken the edge off their hunger for the world's beauty; as confectionery may spoil the appetite for a proper meal.

The home-life of this group of young men was wholly averse from anything "sensuous" in religion. It was Protestant, through and through. Some of them went through a phase of solemnity: they became, for a time, didactic and aggressive: their reverence for the Bible was corrupted with superstition: they were unreasonable and uncharitable in their arguments and interpretations. But they did not stay many years in these waste places. To deliver them out of their Protestantism, they needed a modern prophet, a man of their own time, a living voice: and he must be wrathful and assertive and sublime and hard to understand, or he would be no true prophet. And they found him: for they found Carlyle. He took them in hand: he gave them, so far as he could, a philosophical religion and a world-wide outlook. Their written lives bear witness to him. Some of their letters display his influence. No such letters now: very long, very grave: dutiful, but without servility; self-confessing, but without self-abasement—"a graine of glorie mixt with humbleness"—but their ambition, mostly, is limited to the hope of obtaining some small appointment, just enough to live-on, with plenty of work to be got from it.

This group of young men learned, at home, to exercise the gift of restraint. They were industrious, business-like, methodical. They were inclined to err on the side of conventionality, lest they should give offence. Their religion tended to be formal, deliberate, and narrow: Carlyle widened it, but did not make it outwardly beautiful. They were old for their age, and careful of opportunities: and they thought more of Germany than of France.

The range of their work, in the later years, followed the lines which the earlier years had laid down. It ran as it were into a mould. It followed the lines of least resistance: it went easily in this direction, not in that: it was deep here, and shallow there. In the fine arts, it was hindered by the general distrust of naked, violent, or passionate forms of expression in sculpture or painting or music. In the natural sciences, where neither passion nor sentiment nor desire nor religion nor beauty has any place or business, it went ahead.

The works of the men of science, applied to a thousand uses, were enough and more than enough to make the Age great. They live at every turn of present affairs. But when we try to fix our attention on the men of science in their passionless kingdom, it flies off to the prophets and reformers in their revolutionary splendour. We veer from Darwin to Carlyle, from Lister to Ruskin, from the Royal

Society and the British Association to Lord Shaftesbury, the Factory Acts, the Trades Unions, the School Board, the Fabian Society, the Salvation Army. Besides, this or that man was half-a-dozen men in one: for example, Kingsley. Naturalist, country parson, University professor, novelist, poet, Christian Socialist—he will not be pigeon-holed: but we know this much of him, that he thoroughly represents the Age.

The critics who laugh at its proprieties, and are forgetful of its prophets, talk as if the Victorian Age were only the Augustan Age over again, brought up to date with new scenery and modern costumes. There are points of resemblance: the long spell of peace and plenty, the settled government, the established religion, the crowd of intellectuals, their culture and their leisure made possible in Rome by slavery, and in England by conditions of labour as bad as slavery. But the Augustan Age was all poets and no prophets. Our intellectuals were of different stuff, by all the difference which is between an ode of Horace and the Song of the Shirt. They were zealous for popular education, for national health and efficiency, for the redemption of body and soul: and they were longing to promote a better understanding between the classes and the masses. "We must educate our masters"—that was Lord Sherbrooke's wise saying. But our intellectuals neither were afraid of their masters, nor flattered

them: it was not fear, that inspired them to diffuse their learning, share their culture, give themselves to be spent in the service of the working man and the agricultural labourer.

At this distance of time, it is easy to say that the whole thing was tentative and transitional. Labour now is not minded to fall down and worship Ruskin and Maurice lecturing at the Working Men's College. Of course it was transitional: everything always is. But there was quiet continuous advance through half-a-century: and our intellectuals were in the very thick of it. If they had kept themselves to themselves, the Age would still have been brilliant: but it would not have reached the full height of its greatness.

Perhaps, from this point of view, its foremost representative is Huxley. His written life is a mirror of the Age at its best. They who have not read his life, yet think themselves able to judge his times, are critics without authority. Let them read it carefully, with special attention to the influence of the early home-life on the work of later years.

They are within their rights, when they criticise the restraint that was enforced on the girls of the family. There is no denying that the Age was slow to entrust serious responsibility to girls, and to set them free for it. But already, in 1854, Miss Nightingale and her nurses had gone off to the

Crimea. That was the beginning of a wider life for girls, and more independence, whether at home or elsewhere: and the latter half of the Age was all the better for it. Too much has been said of the dullness and pettiness of girls' lives fifty years ago. If home had been so bad as all that, they would not have become such adorable wives and mothers.

So I find my resting-place, like Abt Vogler, in the C major of this life; in the home-life. The virtues which sustain it are traditional, not original: our daily bread is sweetened with honey from the Victorian hive. Present affairs are on a grander scale: and the world never was so full of a number of things. Only, there is a dearth of prophets. We need men like Carlyle and Ruskin and Kingsley and Huxley and Morris: and we cannot get them by whistling for them. They must be made at home; it takes a lot of time, to make them. Early Victorian home-life did not make wonderful painters, sculptors, or musicians: but it was remarkably successful over the making of such men as we now most urgently need.

IX

THE WATER-BABIES

It was in the spring of 1862, at Eversley, that Kingsley started to write *The Water-Babies*. He had written *The Heroes*, in the winter of 1855, for his three elder children: now, he would write for a child four years old. Home, and the spring, and the joy of the country, so enchanted him that for sixty pages he kept within the limits of a child's thoughts. Then comes a change, and the book begins to be not a book for children, but *The Water-Babies*. In a letter to Maurice, he says:

When you read the book, I hope you will see that I have not been idling my time away. I have tried, in all sorts of queer ways, to make children and grown folks understand that there is a quite miraculous and divine element underlying all physical nature; and that nobody knows anything about anything in the sense in which they may know God in Christ, and right and wrong. And if I have wrapped up my parable in seeming tomfooleries, it is because so only could I get the pill swallowed by a generation who are not believing, with anything like their whole heart, in the Living God. Meanwhile, remember that the physical science in the book is *not* nonsense, but accurate earnest, so far as I dare speak yet.

It was published by Macmillans, with two charming illustrations by Noel Paton, in 1863: and my father

gave it to me that year for a birthday present: doubtless, he wanted to read it himself: for he knew, or was on the way to know, the men of science who are hustled up and down its pages: besides, it was he who discovered, when he was a medical student, not yet out of the dissecting-rooms, that evil worm, *trichina spiralis*, which was claimed and taken from him by Professor Ptthmllnsprts, whose real name was Put-them-all-in-spirits:

One fault he had which cock-robins have likewise, as you may see if you will look out of the nursery window—that when anyone else found a curious worm, he would hop round them, and peck them, and set up his tail, and bristle up his feathers, just as a cock-robin would; and declare that he found the worm first; and that it was his worm; and, if not, that then it was not a worm at all.

And I remember the Professor: a rather formidable person for a shy boy to shake hands with.

Only two years later, in 1865, came Alice in Wonderland. The two books are so unlike in plan, that they might be fifty years apart in date. The two writers were as unlike as two English gentlemen could well be, within the limits of the same vocation and social standing. I had the privilege, some years after 1865, of doing mathematics for Lewis Carroll; and the honour of meeting her who is Alice. To the average undergraduate, he was a lonely and uncongenial man, with a pale imperturbable face, stiff grey hair, rigid clerical attire: he took solitary walks, and he walked fast, as if he were going

not among us but through us: he seemed to be wanting not to get anywhere but to get away from somewhere: he had the look of a man in danger of the habit of talking to himself: we noted that his trousers were turned-up unduly high, and that he shouldered his furled umbrella with an air of defiance. We heard that he said brilliant things in Commonroom: that he preached well, on rare occasions, in this or that out-of-the-way place, overcoming, to help a friend, his dread of publicity; that he was devoted to a group of children, and amused himself with photographing them: and, because it appeared to us that man delighted not him, no, nor woman neither, we were glad that he had made friends with some children, if it were only as a refuge from mathematics, which nobody but the examiners took seriously. That was the undergraduate mind toward this hidden life: yet, like a touched-off rocket, it had shot up, with a whizz and a bang, into the sky, and had flung a hundred coloured stars for our delight.

In the tumultuous welcome given to Alice, the Water-Babies went down, and out. Lewis Carroll had it all his own way, from 1865 right up to the first performance of *Peter Pan*: and he still is read with joy in every well-conducted British nursery, and in many translations. He and Sir James Barrie are enthroned side by side in the children's favour: there is Alice for all the year round, and *Peter Pan*

at Christmas: and on the steps of the throne, as in the great Bellini picture in Venice, angelical little people are seated, with musical instruments too big for them, playing selections from the Child's Garden of Verses, the Rose and the Ring, and Andrew Lang's fairy books. But Hans Andersen is greatest of all, and his throne highest of all: he is a poet, every inch of him, through and through. Still, the Water-Babies is a mighty fine book: a more potent book than Alice: for Alice's adventures, after all, are not in Wonderland: they are only in Funnyland. I would not give my copy of the Water-Babies for a wilderness of mad hatters.

It is not a book for children. They dash at it, are pleased with bits of it, gain some dim notion of some sort of fairy-tale: but every thread breaks as they pull on it. They are overwhelmed by inexplicable words and unintelligible names; by political gibes, paradoxes, spurts of rage, whirling chaff; by religion, science, history, natural history, and mythology, all talking at once. "To my youngest son, Grenville Arthur, and to all other good little boys." That is the dedication. How far did Grenville Arthur get? I was a good little boy, and older than he, but I did not get far: I staggered and fell under the weight of arguments hurled at me, like Tarpeia under the shields. One characteristic string of words—"nasty, dirty, frowzy, grubby, smelly old monks"—I learned, and chanted upstairs

and downstairs, till I was silenced. Now and again, I found passages which I could suddenly enjoy: but I soon lost the purport of the book. Children reading it have the Universe over their heads, but nothing under their feet: they cannot stand-up to the Carlylean immensities and eternities.

If it were possible for a bottle of wine to improve steadily, for fifty-eight years, in a cellar, this book would be that bottle of wine. Nobody but an old Victorian can fully appreciate it. Observe him, as he slowly fills his glass, inhales its fragrance, sips, holds it to the light, sips again. It brings back to him the past: he is reminded of the feel of life then, and the lives of men and women who are dead now; the excitement of great controversies, the thrill of great discoveries, the incessant change, incessant levelling-up, and all the fun of the fair: till the old gentleman, surcharged with pride and thankfulness, raises his glass, with a gesture of reverence, and says to himself, "The Victorian Age: God bless it."*

* There is a book waiting to be written, long due and overdue. Why does not somebody write *The New Water-Babies*? The feel of life, the excitement of controversies, the change and levelling-up, are even more obstreperous now than they were in 1863. What an opportunity is here! Fifty-eight years, since Kingsley told the Victorian Age what he thought of it. Will nobody deal faithfully with our virtues and vices and arts and sciences and theories and crazes, as they are now? Surely this mode of wild satirical writing must be out of fashion: or somebody would be having a shy at the cocoa-nuts.

If you did not come into the world by 1870 at the latest, you will not be on terms of perfect intimacy with the book. If you did not come before 1890, much of it will seem to you rubbish. If you did not come before 1910, have nothing to do with it: read something else. It is not a book for good little boys; it is a book for good little old folk, who were actually there when all the things in it were really happening. We read it, not that we may feel young, but that we may feel old. Peter Pan, who refused to grow up, invites us to try to feel young. Tom the water-baby, who did grow up, invites us to feel old, and to rejoice over our accumulated treasure of memories and experiences.

That is one reason why old folk love the book, and children find it rather troublesome stuff. Now for another. It is full of a passionate sense of the world's beauty. This rapture, this poetry, is wasted on children. They are too young for it. They are wellnigh indifferent to the world's beauty. Lewis Carroll recognised this indifference; perhaps in himself, certainly in them. The world of Alice's adventures is blank and featureless and void; no form, no colour, no scenery, no atmosphere; nothing to be said about it, nothing to be looked-at in it: no world at all, but just enough space for a dream to move in. But the world of the Water-Babies is the real world, form and colour and sound and smell of real country all complete; the grown-ups' world,

as a poet sees it, where children fail to see it. If once I start transcribing, I shall never stop: I must limit myself to three passages of descriptive writing, in the first chapter:—

(1) Old Mrs. Earth was still fast asleep; and, like many pretty people, she looked still prettier asleep than awake. The great elm-trees in the gold-green meadows were fast asleep above, and the cows fast asleep beneath them; nay, the few clouds which were about were fast asleep likewise, and so tired that they had lain down on the earth to rest, in long white flakes and bars, among the stems of the elm-trees, and along the tops of the alders by the stream, waiting for the sun to bid them rise and go about their day's business in the clear blue overhead.

(2) At last, at the bottom of a hill, they came to a spring: not such a spring as you see here, which soaks up out of a white gravel in the bog, among red flycatchers, and pink bottle-heath, and sweet white orchis; nor such a one as you may see, too, here, which bubbles up under the warm sand-bank in the hollow lane, by the great tuft of lady ferns, and makes the sand dance reels at the bottom, day and night, all the year round; not such a spring as either of those: but a real North country limestone fountain, like one of those in Sicily or Greece, where the old heathen fancied the nymphs sat cooling themselves the hot summer's day, while the shepherds peeped at them from behind the bushes. Out of a low cave of rock, at the foot of a limestone crag, the great fountain rose, quelling and bubbling and gurgling, so clear that you could not tell where the water ended and the air began; and ran away under the road, a stream large enough to turn a mill; among blue geranium, and golden globe-flower, and wild raspberry, and the bird-cherry with its tassels of snow.

(3) Behind him, far below, was Harthover, and the dark woods, and the shining salmon river; and on his left, far below, was the town, and the smoking chimnies of the collieries; and far, far away, the

river widened to the shining sea; and little white specks, which were ships, lay on its bosom. Before him lay, spread out like a map, great plains, and farms, and villages, amid dark knots of trees. And to his right rose moor after moor, hill after hill, till they faded away, blue into blue sky.

Then comes the song of the river, "Clear and cool, clear and cool." This first chapter, which Kingsley wrote offhand, is drunk with beauty; and so are all the other chapters. He never stops wondering and worshipping and rhapsodising. And he thought that he was writing a book for children.

He was half-a-dozen men in one. Of these men, one was a poet, another was a sportsman, another was a born naturalist. Kingsley understood animals, so far as humanity is capable of understanding them. The busy creatures that are at home in his book—the wicked otter, the lobster, the flies, caddis-worms, eels, salmon, gulls, crows, and so forth—are the real thing. They behave each after its kind; they are in their natural surroundings; they stick to their own sub-human affairs; they talk as they really would, if they could. The creatures in Alice have no flesh-and-blood life, no distinctive ways or pursuits; no predatory habits, collective instincts, or family ties: they talk like Lewis Carroll: they are not living animals but performing images. The white rabbit in Alice is not a real rabbit: the dragon-fly in the Water-Babies is a real dragon-fly. Tom comes across him, in chapter three, just emerging

from his pupal covering: a critical moment of the life-cycle:—

“I want to be quiet. I want to split.”

“Why do you want to split?” said Tom.

“Because my brothers and sisters have all split, and turned into beautiful creatures with wings; and I want to split too. Don’t speak to me. I am sure I shall split. I will split!”

Tom stood still, and watched him. And he swelled himself, and puffed, and stretched himself out stiff, and at last—crack, puff, bang—he opened all down his back, and then up to the top of his head.

And out of his inside came the most slender, elegant, soft creature; but very pale and weak, like a little child who has been ill a long time in a dark room. It moved its legs very feebly; and looked about it half ashamed, like a girl when she goes for the first time into a ball-room; and then it began walking slowly up a grass stem to the top of the water.

And as the creature sat in the warm bright sun, a wonderful change came over it. It grew strong and firm; the most lovely colours began to show on its body, blue and yellow and black, spots and bars and rings; out of its back rose four great wings of bright brown gauze; and its eyes grew so large that they filled all its head, and shone like ten thousand diamonds.

“Oh, you beautiful creature!” said Tom; and he put out his hand to catch it.

But the thing whirled up into the air, and hung poised on its wings a moment, and then settled down again by Tom quite fearless.

“No!” it said, “you cannot catch me. I am a dragon-fly now, the King of all the flies; and I shall dance in the sunshine, and hawk over the river, and catch gnats, and have a beautiful wife like myself. I know what I shall do. Hurrah!” And he flew away into the air, and began catching gnats.

Even children are able to admire this episode: and it is only one of many in the course of the book.

But they cannot properly value its exquisite wording. To enjoy it to the full, is a privilege of later years. Natural history and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* kiss each other over the telling of it. Hans Andersen himself might have written it: Barrie himself could not write anything better than the two similes—"like a little child who has been ill a long time in a dark room—like a girl when she goes for the first time into a ball-room."

On my way into the deeps of the book, I note the unexpected phrase, in his letter to Maurice: "Remember that the physical science in the book is not nonsense, but accurate earnest, as far as I dare speak yet." I find the explanation of this phrase in a letter to Rolleston, October, 1862:—

I am glad to see that you incline to my belief, which I hardly dare state in these days, even to those who call themselves spiritual, viz., that the soul of each living being, down to the lowest, secretes the body thereof, as a snail secretes its shell, and that the body is nothing more than the expression, in terms of matter, of the stage of development to which the being has arrived. If that isn't awful doctrine, what is? and yet it is in my mind strictly philosophical and strictly orthodox; but I am not going to tell anyone what I have just told you. I wish you would *envisager* that gorilla brain, for once in a way, and the baboon brain also, under the fancy of their being *degraded* forms. I shall torment you and your compeers with my degradation theory, till you give me a plain Yes or No from facts.

Again, in chapter six of the book, "You must know and believe that people's souls make their bodies,

just as a snail makes its shell. (I am not joking, my little man; I am in serious, solemn earnest.)" His instance does not establish his theory. Still, this theory of degraded forms brings us to the deeps of the book, to its ethics and its religion.

Are these wasted on children? They were on me. It is a man's religion, not a child's. The letter to Maurice anticipates failure. "I have tried in all sorts of queer ways: I have wrapped up my parable in seeming tomfooleries: so only could I get the pill swallowed." No child expects to find its religion in such wrappings.

The moral is plain enough: "Those that wish to be clean, clean they will be; and those that wish to be foul, foul they will be." It is the moral issue of his degradation-theory. Down all the queer ways, under all the tomfooleries, from the first chapter to the last, it works out, as inevitable as the ending of a tragedy. Take it or leave it, he says, it is of divine authority. It is Thus saith the Lord: it is not Thus saith Kingsley.

But if he had been content, writing for children, to use the religious imagery of children, he would have endangered his opportunity of preaching a man's religion to grown-up folk. To avoid this danger, he devised a mystery-play, which runs deep through the book. His method here is admirable. He does not himself speak the words about clean and foul: he gives them to be spoken by his players.

There is the poor Irishwoman, who also is Queen of the Fairies: and there are Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, and her sister Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid. The fourth player, Mother Carey, represents divine authority, not in the moral law, but in creation: she sits on her throne, not making things, but making them make themselves. Still, she is of one mind with the other three players, and is inseparable from them. All four of them are of one mind, and of one substance: for each of them is God. Toward this discovery, at the end of all their adventures, come Tom and Ellie, grown-up. But they would never have come toward it, if they had not been in love with each other. Was ever book, at the last moment, skied to such a finish? Out of all the huddled wrappings of its fooleries, it escapes at last. Even the use of the word "fairy" for Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid—we know what use Lord Beaconsfield made of it—does not injure the magnificence of the book here:—

So he stood and looked at Ellie, and Ellie looked at him; and they liked the employment so much that they stood and looked for seven years more, and neither spoke nor stirred.

At last they heard the fairy say: "Attention, children! Are you never going to look at me again?"

"We have been looking at you all this while," they said. And so they thought they had been.

"Then look at me once more," said she.

They looked—and both of them cried out at once, "Oh, who are you, after all?"

"You are our dear Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby."

"No, you are good Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid; but you are grown quite beautiful now!"

"To you," said the fairy. "But look again."

"You are Mother Carey," said Tom, in a very low, solemn voice; for he had found out something which made him very happy, and yet frightened him more than all that he had ever seen.

"But you are grown quite young again."

"To you," said the fairy. "Look again."

"You are the Irishwoman who met me the day I went to Harth-over!"

And when; ey looked she was neither of them, and yet all of them at once.

"My name is written in my eyes, if you have eyes to see it there."

And they looked into her great, deep, soft eyes, and they changed again and again into every hue, as the light changes in a diamond.

"Now read my name," said she, at last.

And her eyes flashed, for one moment, clear, white, blazing light: but the children could not read her name; for they were dazzled, and hid their faces in their hands.

That is the end of the mystery-play: then, a most unnecessary flourish of chaff, and the end of the book.

Why did he think that any sane man or woman could object to this pill, as he calls it? Why did he roll it up, this parable or pill or whatever it is, in a thousand layers of nonsense unintelligible to the nursery and wearisome in the study? It is one of the best things in the book, and one of the best pills in the world: but spiritual pills ought to be taken on an empty soul. He was attempting impossibilities: he put-in everything, he left-out nothing.

Lewis Carroll went to the opposite extreme: he left-out everything. He produces his effects *in vacuo*. His exquisite performers have plenty to say to each other, but not a word to us: they are unconscious of our existence: they do not belong to our world, and they have none of their own: they move on the lines not of life but of a diagram of Euclid. Thus isolated, they stand-out clear: they exchange, among themselves, precise wit, clever parodies, fantasies, absurdities. They have no morals, no religion: *Défense à Dieu, De faire miracles en ce lieu*. We have no fear that they will seek to improve the occasion; that they will ask us to admire anything, do anything, or believe in anything.

There are books written indeed for children only. All honour to the writers. These books are unknown to the general reader: they stay in the nursery or the schoolroom, and will not come downstairs to be introduced to strangers. Their one thought is to help and amuse the children. They present to them, on a small stage, quiet little plays of home-life: mild adventure, featherweight comedy, miniature tragedy. The scenery is well-painted, but not elaborate: a room in a cottage, a field, a wood, a sandy beach, and so forth. The characters in these plays are natural and simple: the episodes are the ordinary happenings of childhood: the mysteries of life neither are left-out where they ought to

come-in, nor come-in where they ought to be left-out. It was said of Garrick, that he had such a way with children that they really took him to be a child. So it is with the devoted writers of these books. They know what can be done: and they do it, without any desire to win the applause of grown-up critics. With books of such restraint and reverence, and with Mr. Arthur Mee's admirable paper and magazine for children, let us hope that the nursery and the schoolroom are more or less immunized against the maladies which they can hardly fail to observe in us.

X

A QUESTION OF SIZE

OUR minds are furnished with general ideas: and size is one of them. We must not confound the metaphysical idea of size with the mathematical measuring of tangible objects, or we shall have Dr. Johnson down on us. But there is a question of size, apart from metaphysics. Into our daily life, the idea of size comes with a picturesque touch: it plays on our imagination: it was of interest to us, even when we were not yet out of the nursery. *How big is the moon, really? Is it bigger than Hyde Park? than all London? than all the world?* To this day, I do not know the answer to the last question. We were less interested in the idea of number: we might ask, *How many is a million?* But we did not care to be told.

It is natural, that children should be more attentive to size than to number. Objects of great size may be fearful to them: rows of numerals are not. A small child in the front of the audience, at a children's fairy-play, was alarmed even to tears by the height of a girl who was taking part in it—"The Queen is so tall." Size, to children, may seem

to be threatening action. Suppose the sea should come up to the window-sill. Suppose Nelson's Column should fall on us. These are day-terrors of size: tenfold worse are its night-terrors, when it goes in and out, measureless, and as it were alive, in vague shapes which oppress the soul till they drive a child half mad.*

But these terrors are soon outgrown: nor do they interfere with the instinctive habit of measurement. Children love to note effects of distance: to see men and women, far down the road, as crawling insects: or ships, on the horizon, as dots; or home, from the top of the hill, no bigger than a postage-stamp. Surely, a most kind world, thus to combine instruction with amusement.

In this Paradise of their innocence, they are tempted: not by one serpent, but by two, which are round the children's tree of knowledge like the serpents round the wand of Hermes, the messenger of the Gods. These are the telescope and the microscope. They tempt the children to be intellectual; to take liberties with Paradise. Remote objects shall be brought near; and the invisible shall be made visible. "Your eyes shall be opened," say the telescope and the microscope.

* In one child, the usual object of his night-terrors was of the shape of a dome, and white: it seemed to bear down on him, inside his head. It was now large, now small: the terror was more in its presence and pressure than in its size. Half-a-century later, during an illness, this object returned to him.

But the children, bless them, are not in the mood to be tempted. They prefer things to remain at their natural distance and of their natural size. They seem to think that Paradise Enlarged would be Paradise Lost. These revolutionary instruments offer to make Creation widen on their view: and the children are inclined to use them as toys: to take the eye-piece of the microscope as a burning-glass, and to reverse the effects of distance by reversing the telescope.* They like to see Creation with the eye that we call naked, and the Germans call unweaponed. (The contrast between these two epithets is not without significance.) They will peep down your telescope or microscope, and say politely that they can see: and in a moment they are off to play croquet, or to feed the rabbits. You are disappointed: you had hoped that they would take more interest in the Universe.

If they would stop to reason with you, they could justify their position. Why should they give-up their natural world for your illusory world? Besides, they feel that you will be trying to edify them; that you will bid them admire not things but the design of things, and the Wisdom in the design. They hesitate: they are fond of you, but have no wish for

* The child whose night-terror was shaped like a dome had a toy-telescope; his nurse allowed him to have it on Sundays, because it would enable him to "see more of the beauties of Nature." It was thus that he discovered the pleasure of looking down the wrong end of it.

your gradual discourse, your invitation to serious thought. They do not want to look down instruments with you: they want you to come and look at the rabbits with them.

The natural mind, alike in children and in grown-ups, is content, of a starry night, to use its natural eyes. As old folk are proud that they can do without spectacles, so are we proud that we can do without telescopes. Wordsworth, in his account of the big telescope in "Leicester's busy Square," affects surprise at the disappointment produced by it: he suggests half-a-dozen explanations, all of them wide of the mark:—

Whatever be the cause, 'tis sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after one they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

Leicester Square, of all places—with its riff-raff, its cobblestones, its traffic—why should anybody pay twopence, or care twopence, in Leicester Square, for a showman's enlargement of the moon? The only moon worth looking at is the real moon, that is linked-up with tides and eclipses, with human gestation, with our poetry, our delight in beauty, our memories of raids: the only moon, as the children would say, that there really is. You will not find it easy to break them of their habit of looking at naked Nature with the naked eye.

Now that they have run back to their private

world of realities, and have left you and me to ourselves, let us contemplate the Universe. What do you think of it? Can you think, actually think, of the velocity of light? or of the sun's heat? or of millions of millions of miles? I cannot. I try, and fail: I am not thinking: I am only thinking that I am thinking. Of course, when we come to "abstract thought," we stop nowhere. But velocities and heats and distances are not abstract thought. They submit themselves to be measured, calculated, reckoned in standard units, and studied by experimental methods. But I remain pinned down to my very modest allowance of mind, my little annuity of strength, paid punctually, for the exigencies of daily life. As the drunken man said in the railway-carriage, when they told him not to swear, "I ham what I ham, and I can't be no hammer." I might as well try to walk millions of miles as to think of them: I have neither legs for such walking, nor a brain for such thinking:—

Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.

The ordinary man is not intended to regard the Universe as a mathematical equation. It is for wonder, not measurement: it sets him lessons, not sums. If it were conscious of itself, it would contemplate in itself not velocity and heat and distance, but law and beauty and purpose. The distance from here to the sun cannot decide the

purpose of our being here. If it could, we should not be here. Even our men and women of science, in whose work all mankind is exalted, are just as non-mathematical as the rest of us, when it comes to thinking of law and beauty and purpose, which have nothing to do with size.

Now for a flight to the opposite extreme of size: from objects too large for thought, to objects too small; from millions of miles to fractions of micro-millimetres; from the solar system to plague-germs in the stomach of a flea. If it be true, that the disclosures of the telescope make us less happy than before, what effect is wrought, in the ordinary man, by the disclosures of the microscope?

Consider the difference between the two instruments. The exclusive telescope, swinging itself night after night toward the stars, does not care for the man in the street. It is averse from our affairs, it is regardless of our fates. Though it is of human invention, it despises its inventors: it is the proudest of all instruments, and the loneliest. The microscope is in sympathy with our daily life: it is faithful in the public service, it is a lover of the people: none of our concerns is too small for it. Without it, what would become of our industries and manufactures, let alone our medicine and surgery and preventive medicine? That ranting hymn is back in my head—"The people, Lord, the people:

Not crowns, O Lord, but men." Yes, but men, and women, with microscopes. If it were not for them and their microscopes, the people would suffer heavy loss.

It would be delightful, in fine weather, to be a showman of microscopes; with a pitch in Trafalgar Square, or on the Embankment, or in Hyde Park near the Marble Arch. A long narrow table: microscopes, not less than twelve nor more than twenty, well lighted, well sheltered, well labelled: and a full supply of leaflets, in plain words and plain type, describing the exhibits. Here is an opening for any young man of spirit who will find money enough to start the show. He can be sure of a good attendance:

Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands ready with the fee,

Impatient till his moment comes—what an insight must it be!

What an insight it is! Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen, and see the Invisible Visibles! Happy young man, thus quickening and enlightening our humdrum lives: thrice happy, if by the end of each day he has diverted some twopences from the picture-palaces to his microscopes.

But he must be wise; give us a proper show; not play down to us, or treat us like babies. We do not care for the hideous profile of a louse, nor for smears of blood or of milk, nor for needle-points magnified to hedge-stakes, and threads magnified

to cables. Needle and thread, to the natural eye, are of admirable delicacy: the microscope grossly exaggerates their imperfections, ruins their characters as if it were an old woman gossiping at a tea-party—*You think them so refined? Well, all I can say is—*and then comes the cruel exposure. Our young man of spirit will show us law, beauty, and purpose in the kingdom of small things:—

Web of frog, and foot of fly;
Sting of bee, and emmet's eye;
Pith of rush, and blight of rye;
Dust from wing of butterfly;
Vorticella, duckweed's guest;
Germs of every mortal pest—

he can show us these, to begin with. Especially, he must show us germs: tubercle, enteric, dysentery, malaria, and so forth. Everybody is talking germs to us: nobody is showing them to us. We are fed up with bacteriology in popular magazines and newspapers: we want to use our eyes not to read bacteriology but to see bacteria. We are tired of being told by "our medical correspondent" that Professor Jujitsu, of the Bio-chemical Department of the Yokohama Institute, has recently arrived at certain conclusions which bid fair to possess far-reaching potentialities. We cannot stand much more newspapering. If the young man will let us see with our own eyes the agents of our own diseases, we shall be grateful to him. The other exhibits will please

us well enough—I would pay twopence to see Vorticella again, for I lost my heart to her, ages back—but our chief desire is for the germs. Is there no young man, unemployed, humorous, venturesome, fond of teaching, to be our Pasteur of the pavement?

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education could afford to give him a table and twenty microscopes. Later, they might set up one or more kiosks, huts, or little teaching-shops. Finally, when the picture-palace business is disgraced, they could rent an empty palace, and he would show us living germs, in pure culture, performing on the screen: tempestuous creatures a foot long, fighting for dear life against a white blood-corpuscle, or playing football with a red one. Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Pasteur—what would they not have paid, for that sight? But he must not wait for a palace: here is the pavement waiting for him: and the buzz of our talk will be round him —*So that's what I had last winter. So that's what nearly killed my boy in Gallipoli. And here's that damned diphtheria. And here's plague: fancy me able to see plague!*

Such is the intensive power of the microscope. It understands us, it adjusts itself to our ways. It shows us germs, and we go away not less happy than before, but happier: “Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas.” It shows us a speck of dust off a butterfly’s wing, a speck of life off a thread of duckweed, and they are of exquisite intricacy.

Stars beyond the range of our vision are what we had expected. Law and beauty and purpose, especially beauty, in a speck of dust, are what we had not expected. Our compliments, to the telescope: our love, to the microscope.

But the question remains, and I put it straight to you, Can you think, actually think, of the smallness of germs? or of fractions of micro-millimetres? I cannot. Perhaps, from professional acquaintance with germs, I may be able to cut my thoughts of them finer than you can cut yours. But, to the best of my belief, when I think of them I am visualising the look of them under the microscope: I am not thinking of them at their natural size: I have in my head that enlarged image of them. And you, likewise, have you not in your head a picture of them, 1500-fold magnified, which you have seen somewhere? I try, and fail, to think of a germ as it really is. The mills of the brain refuse to grind so exceeding small. The germ gets magnified in my head, on its way into my thoughts.

Besides, a germ has structure; let alone the fact that it has life. It is of unthinkable complexity. It is a huge fabric, as compared with one of its constituent molecules. Long before I get to molecules, I cease to be thinking. It is not possible for the ordinary man to think either of the immensities of the Universe or, "if I may coin so terrible a word," of its infinitesimalities. To visualise

molecules as big as peas is not to think, but to evade thinking. Men and women of science are able to think of the constituent atoms of a molecule, the constituent elements of an atom. For the rest of us, millions of miles and fractions of micro-millimetres are not more than words. We divide visible things into those which we can see with the naked eye, and those which we cannot see without a microscope: and we enjoy to detect, with the microscope, law and beauty and purpose in particles of that particle of Nature which closely surrounds and immediately concerns us.

After all, there is something to be said for the naked eye. We see with it all that poets and artists and men of action in pre-telescopic and pre-microscopic times could ever see. Besides, these instruments do not bring us to the end, either way, of size: rather, they set us to try to imagine what is beyond the beyond, of great and small. They enable us, while we are using them, to be slightly more observant, more intelligent: but the naked eye will do that, and will beat them at their own game, if we give it the chance.

XI

OUR MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

ONCE on a time, it was possible to believe that the keys of national health and efficiency were in the doctor's pocket. Traces of this old superstition lingered, here and there, to a time within the memory of the living. Our deliverance came with the work of Miss Nightingale, Edmund Parkes, Sir Edwin Chadwick, and Sir John Simon. They founded the modern study of public health. They told the nation that it had got those keys in its own pocket. If it wanted to improve its health and efficiency, it must pour out its money over them; exercise its will, conscience, and forethought; mend its ways, be ashamed of its ignorance, and repent of its iniquities. If the nation wanted things to be done, the nation must do them. The doctors would help: they were longing to help. But the nation must set its own house in order. Above all, it must devote itself, heart and soul, not only to the treatment but to the prevention of disease.

Here was a new science, which appealed to the whole community. No nonsense about it; no ques-

tion of its value. It was a real science: it fulfilled Huxley's definition of science as organised common-sense. But it was not a proprietary article: it was a national duty, a call to national service, to national ambition for national health.

Later, the imaginative mind of the community was quickened by the work of Pasteur and Lister: by the wonders of bacteriology, the victories over anthrax and rabies, the discovery of diphtheria-antitoxin, the expeditions of the Liverpool and London Schools of Tropical Medicine, the discovery of the mosquito as the intermediate host of malaria and yellow fever, the modern study of cholera, plague, and sleeping sickness, the victory over Malta fever—what is the use of a string of words for gifts which have changed the world's outlook?

From 1914 to 1918, this body of science and practice was put to the crucial test. The War showed us, on a colossal scale, the working-out of it all, in the lives of our men saved or safeguarded, by modern methods of treatment and protective treatment, against disease and death. Up to 1914, we had thought well of medicine and surgery; now, we were down on our knees to them.

These three periods—the founding of sanitary science, the rise of bacteriology, and the working-out of science and practice in the War—are episodes of national history. During each of them, we took unusual interest in the work of our physiologists

and pathologists, our physicians and surgeons. We heard of discoveries and achievements: and were eager to read about them. It is of advantage all round, that the medical sciences, and their uses in practice, should be regarded as national property; that the nation should understand the development of its own property; that medicine and surgery should not be regarded as a professional side-show. They are, and will be to the end of the world, imperfect instruments. They are always in the making. They do not arrive on earth ready-made from the skies, like the image of Diana of the Ephesians which fell down from Jupiter: they can always be spoken against: they are no better than they ought to be: *Tant de choses encore à travailler*. The more need, that the nation should realise that they are so good as they are. Popular teaching, on such medical and surgical facts as are of national concern, should be distributed to every home in the land.

For popular teaching, we look to our medical correspondent in this or that great newspaper. In theory, in ideal, his office is altogether magnificent: he is more than a representative of his profession, he is one of its ambassadors: and in the Table of Precedency we find Ambassadors next to the Royal Family, and in front of the Archbishops, the Lord Chancellor, and the Prime Minister. At this height of honour, His Excellency The Medical Ambassador is above the need of advice. Yet,

because he represents his profession, I venture, as a member of it, owing to it not only my life but the happiness of my life, to say something to him of the inequalities of his method.

Perhaps it comes first to be said, that the medical sciences are not always at the same level of general interest. They are more productive of discoveries and achievements at one time than at another. They have their periods, their episodes. They are natural sciences: therefore, they do not move with jog-trot regularity. They rise to sudden heights of vision: they subside to plains of criticism, doubting the reality of what they saw from the heights, re-investigating their investigations, re-stating their conclusions, cross-examining their witnesses. They push their way laboriously toward this or that fact—as Claude Bernard said of his discovery of glycogen, *Après beaucoup d'essais et plusieurs illusions que je fus obligé de rectifier par des tâtonnements*—through conflicting theories, intricacies of evidence, accumulated fallacies, difficulties of interpretation, statistics and counter-statistics, arguments and counter-arguments.

That is what they are doing now. Their work is profoundly sceptical, analytical, and subtle. Their lines of reasoning, their technical processes, their language, are absolutely unintelligible to the general reader. He wants discoveries and achievements: and he cannot have them. This time of

minute and abstruse thought in the medical sciences is not favourable to them: the way is not yet cleared for them. There is no immediate prospect of a revolution, of a new learning, such as came with Pasteur and Lister: no possibility of harking back to those easier problems which set the pace, fifty years ago, for creative work. It is a time of more analysis than synthesis. Happily, we can be confident that when the discoveries and achievements do at last come, they will be, in virtue of the incessant work that is now being done, of real and permanent value.

Meanwhile, the newspapers have to take it into account, that events of the first magnitude in science and practice are not happening. Therefore, the amount of news—such news as can be popularised for general reading—is less. But the newspapers seem unwilling or unable to reduce the amount of space which they give to these subjects. They seem to be striving to provide the full tale of bricks, regardless of a shortage of straw: as if the nation were hopelessly addicted to this one sort of reading. But we are not interested in articles which appear to have been written for the sake of writing. We feel that our medical correspondent has been casting about for something to say: that he is like Israel in Egypt: “*Go ye, get you straw where ye can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.*” So the people were scattered abroad throughout

all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw."

He is in a difficult position. He cannot divest himself of the majesty of his great office. He can ask to be recalled: but, till that is done, his person and his work are sacred. Ambassador he remains, though in adversity: and the ambassadorial rule is, to say nothing, if there be nothing worth saying. He cannot live-up to this hard rule: he is caught between idealities and actualities, between his dignity and his task: and he sets himself to reconcile them.

As representative of his profession, he is conversant with all its affairs. To him its honour is entrusted; in him its will is declared; and its mind and policy are known to him. Surely, if he, who is at the heart of these affairs, will tell us about them, we shall read with attention the writings of his privileged pen. He can describe to us the administrative machinery of Royal Colleges, Councils, Committees, and Societies; the methods of teaching and examining; the maintenance, or the surrender, of this or that prerogative; the wheels within wheels of the professional system. Here are themes enough for him, and more than enough. Discoveries and achievements run short: he is not reduced to silence: he straightway begins to tell us about something else.

I want him to be careful not to give us too much

of a good thing. The internal arrangements of his profession are, to the general reader, dull. Its training of students; its friendly or unfriendly relations with the Government and the Ministry of Health; its rights, dissensions, grievances, tactics, politics, finance—all of them, rather dull: or, at the most, of slight and fugitive interest. No vivid effects are to be got with such colourless materials. Besides, his profession, just now, is going through a phase of unsettlement bordering on confusion.

If he cannot bring himself to agree with me, that the general reader pays little or no regard to these affairs—if he insists on it, that they are of national interest—then I implore him to handle them with impartiality. In matters under dispute, he must take neither one side nor the other. It is the way of newspapers, to take sides: it is not the way of ambassadors. If his paper is trying to get its knife into the Government, he must not lend his knowledge of anatomy to direct that weapon. For him to take sides because his paper takes them, is for him to represent not his profession but his paper. But let it be granted that his opinions are absolutely his own. That is just what I resent in them; that they are his own opinions: and, so often as they are his and not mine—so often as he is on the one side and I am on the other—I have to ask myself whether he is really and truly representative of his profession.

I wish, also, that he would be more doubtful of himself over subjects which lie on either hand of the usual work of his profession: they are attractive, as the fashions are attractive: they are deep enough for life-long study, but they have been messed-up with a dreadful amount of superficial talk. Science and practice bear on them: but there are foolish people who dabble in them. Over all these subjects, he can well afford to have a waiting mind; the more he is dogmatic, the less he is representative. The mind of his profession is known to him: it is, on these outlying subjects, a waiting mind; it is divided, not made up, half-informed. His opinions, here, cannot claim more attention than is given to a letter signed *Medicus*. Doubtless, *Medicus* may have something to tell us that is valuable: but so may *Non-Medicus*: indeed, so may *Anti-Medicus*.

But the worst of his difficulties is none of his making. It is, that he cannot isolate his work, cannot get it clear away from its surroundings. Odds and ends, scraps and snippets of journalism incessantly disturb his teaching. Though he be on the staff of the best of all papers, he never for one hour has his special department to himself. Though the editing be set to exclude what is false and worthless, his first-rate stuff is always up against third-rate stuff, in that or another paper. His note on the Report of the Lister Institute, his article on the physiological measurement of industrial

fatigue, his review of the advancement of modern veterinary practice, are crossed by advertisements of Somebody's pills and Somebody's ointment; by news of the death of a centenarian and the birth of triplets; by a letter from *A Foe to Medical Tyranny*, a young lady's voice restored by falling off the end of the pier, and that West-End physician's estimate of cocktails. How can he keep his work distinctive and authoritative, lifted clean above all this journalistic patter?

And how can he enable the general reader to see through the sensational reports of new discoveries which are not discoveries, and grand achievements which are not achievements? The general reader needs to be protected against the grinding of axes. Somebody announces a new treatment of cancer, or of consumption: there is nothing in it, or next to nothing, either new or true: still, out it comes, in large type: then comes the miserable disappointment of sufferers from these diseases, when the doctor has to tell them the truth about it. Why should not our medical correspondent have the power to prevent this offence?

If I owned a great newspaper, I would invite him, as the accredited representative of his profession, to be not our medical correspondent but our medical editor, censor, and adviser. He should have some control over the making-up of my paper. I would trust him to operate on it; to purge and diet it.

He should be in sole charge of the case. His daily visit should be timed to keep the patient fit for to-morrow: on wholesome food, neither too heavy nor too light, and no excess of stimulants.

I dream happily of the undisputed authority, the wider freedom, that are in store for him. He will inform the general reader of all real and valid facts of the first magnitude in the medical sciences, all tested and proven discoveries in medicine and surgery. He will say nothing, unless it be worth saying; he will not write for the sake of writing: he will not indulge his temperament, nor air his own opinions, nor be on either side in matters under dispute, nor handle difficult subjects with easy-going assurance. He will be censor of occasional paragraphs, reports, trivialities, advertisements, and so forth: and his advice will help to decide the acceptance or non-acceptance of letters to the editor. He will resolutely oppose and forbid the publication of all dressed-up and worked-up news of wonderful treatments. And, in general, he will so defend the columns of my great paper as to make them, from the point of view of science and practice, good as good can be; thoroughly sensible and thoroughly truthful.

XII

AN EMINENT VICTORIAN

It is unfortunate, that Nelson's Encyclopædia has called Mrs. Grundy a fictitious personage. I knew her so well, in the later years of her life. She was my senior by many years. At my father's house, I often had the honour of meeting eminent Victorians: and I was introduced to her when I was not yet out of the nursery. My parents had even thought of asking her to be my godmother, and of naming me after her: but they decided against it, for the old reason, that none of their kindred was called by this name. We children saw something of her, now and again. We would come downstairs, tidied and self-conscious, to shake hands with her: or my mother would bring her upstairs to see us just as we were, and to have nursery-tea with us. She had no children of her own: she lost her husband, a man of great promise in the Navy, after a few years of perfect wedded life. Happily, they had not been dependent on his pay: and he was able to leave her very well off.

Within the limits of due formality, she was acceptable to children, because of her dignity, her

grave courtesy, and her beautiful diamonds and old lace: but more, because she never played down to them, nor gushed over them, nor kissed them when they did not want to be kissed. She took them, as they desired to be taken, seriously. Their virtues and vices were not less real to her than the virtues and vices of grown-up people. She believed in original sin, and in grace: and her mind, thus balanced, was able to commend itself to children. She was so plainly grieved or frightened for them, when they were naughty; so plainly thankful, when they were good. It was worth being good, to see her look of triumph: it was hardly worth while being naughty, to see her look of distress. Perhaps, deep down in her sense of the reality of naughtiness, there was a vague fear of remote issues determined elsewhere. But she neither preached at us, nor scolded us for the breaking of anything, unless it were the moral law. Only, as I say, she took children seriously: and I have to add, that she found nothing amiss with corporal punishment.

She had no theory of their education: so long as they were good and obedient over their lessons, she did not greatly care what the lessons were about: the discipline of learning was more precious than the results of learning. She did not live to hear of the modern systematic study of children which now is linked-up to half-a-dozen of the natural sciences. If their tricks and subterfuges, depravities, and

halcyon seasons of righteousness, were out of the range of her comprehension, as some of them were, she left them at that. She could not explain them: and she would not explain them away.

She was more successful with children than with young ladies. It vexed her to feel that she could be distrusted, or unwelcome: that she must knock at the door, and wait to be told to come in: that they were hiding something from her: so silly of them: and she came in ruffled, and ill at ease. She might have fared better with them, if she could have waived the difference of age between them and her: but she could not do it; nor would she let them do it. She showed her age as a traveller displays his passport: and as he, back at Dover, answers the question, *British subject?* with *Yes, thank God*, so she delighted to proclaim herself a loyal subject of Time. I cannot imagine her painting her face, or wearing dresses too young for her, or dancing; though all dancing, half-a-century ago, was decent. Now and again, to please a friend, she went to some grand ball: and I wish to put it on record that she never yawned behind her fan, was not greedy at supper, never gossiped, and at three in the morning looked happier, and handsomer, than some of the young ladies who had danced themselves hot, or had been disappointed of partners.

I emphasise the fact that she was above gossip: for she has not had justice done to her on this point.

I do not deny that she would fling a sharp sentence against people who deserved it: she had no patience with meaningless excuses. If a man was a rake, if a woman was a spendthrift, that is what she called them, when she was bound to speak of them. But her quarrel was more with offences than with offenders: she used the offenders merely as instances, and as signs of the times: it gave her no pleasure, to judge them.

To say of a great lady that she was above gossip, is more impertinence than praise: she would not have thanked me for it. She had many other gifts. It is true that she had prejudices: but consider this, as outweighing them, that she had no superstitions, no crazes, no fads. Her life was a sane mind in a sane body. She was wholly free from any tendency to what she called "nerves": she divided illnesses into those which were "fanciful" and those which were "something really the matter": she was finely contemptuous of all *-isms* in the affairs of health, all special diets, all uncanny ways of getting well: Christian Science was almost as repugnant to her as occultism. A hare-brained young lady offered, in all seriousness, to read her hand. "My dear girl," she answered, "what a gross and childish idea you must have of God!" She could not bear to feel these cults rising round her: they affected her with almost physical oppression as things altogether wrong and unwholesome.

I have just shown these four pages to a wise critic, who says that I have been carried away by my love of the Victorian Age; that she was a meddling and censorious old woman; that she cared only for superficialities; that her insight into children was *nil*; that she was always telling them to pull up their stockings, and not laugh so loud. That she would not let girls walk unaccompanied; that she would not leave a man alone in the room with the girl to whom he was engaged; that her outlook was horribly narrow, and her mind full of nasty suspicions: in brief, that she did more harm than good. "But don't mind me," said the critic, "go on with your writing: I want to see how you will work the thing out from your point of view." And a parting shot: "As for Christian Science and all those things, I don't believe that she ever thought about them."

If she could come to life again, what would she say to this criticism? I have to face the fact that she was sure of the strength of her position, and incapable of deserting it. Her *Apologia* would begin, I think, with a few words of guarded and reluctant admission: they would not go far: she would only allow, at the most, that she might perhaps have been, on this or that question of social conduct, over-scrupulous: that she might have done well, here or there, to accept some slight reverse. Then would come her defence: that she had been born into this world on the wings of a great change:


into a world suffering from the effects of the Regency, George IV., and William IV. "Perhaps I have not always moved with the times," she would say, "but I did then. You cannot imagine what it was like, to be brought up in those days of new ideals and intentions." The nation, tired of a racketsy past, had said, all of a sudden, as the child who was to be Queen had said, "I will be good." It had turned toward Puritanism, to keep this resolution. She would elaborate her defence: then, she would challenge her critic. "This racketsy present: you dislike it, fear it, long to see the last of it. In your heart, you know that things are going wrong: you know quite well, that the Puritanism which you laugh at in me is what would help you now."

So her Apologia would end, on a note of prophecy. It would be stated with care, each point neatly made, in measured and courteous language. A perfect lady: the phrase belongs to her: she had the gift of distinction. In the large, full-furnished, immaculate drawing-room, it was pleasant, across the fastidious tea-table, to study her sensitive care-worn face, her choice of words, her judgments, her intervals of decisive silence. Always, she seemed to be trying to think out the course of the future. *What are we coming to?* It is a fool's question, when it is on a fool's lips: it was not that, on hers.

One of her prejudices—if that be the right name for them—may be recalled here. She resented the

growing volume of talk, in polite society, on diseases. It was about 1880, I think, that she began to be unhappy over it. She said that they were not a proper subject for general conversation: all very well for medical men, and for men of science; but not for ladies; a want of refinement in such talk; something rather commonplace, if not vulgar. I chanced to tell her that I had been operated on for appendicitis: and she said, "I am thankful that your health, under Providence, has been restored: but I hope that you do not describe your case at dinner-parties." That was a quarter of a century ago: I do not know what now is talked of at dinner-parties: for I neither am invited to them, nor give them, except crumb-parties to birds in my garden. If there be anything, in the talk at dinner-parties, like the present orgy of talk in the newspapers, I shall continue to prefer crumb-parties.

But the prejudice which is most intimately associated with the popular idea of her, was her objection to the nude in art. As things are now, thanks to the advancement of science, she could easily be cured. Here was a case (let us have a Greek word for it) a typical case of *gymnophobia*: from *gymnos*=naked, and *phobos*=fear. We should send for the nearest psycho-analyst, to grub down to the very foundations of her being, and go on grubbing till something horrid be unearthed: sift every spadeful of alluvial soil: poke and spy and



scrape: something must be found. Perhaps, when she was in the nursery, some phantasy or some unclean habit: perhaps that time when she saw a little boy with nothing on, and her sex mutined in her little bones: oh, we knew that they would find something at last: psycho-analysts always do.

Whatever be the worth of such findings, I cannot believe that she would have responded to any treatment based on the discovery. Truth may be found at the bottom of a well: but so may a dead cat. Her dislike of the nude in art had some sort of half-reason. She was "shocked," not so much by the fact that the nude was naked, but more by the fear that it was calling attention to the fact that it was naked. It was "alluring." If she felt confident that it was not trying to allure anybody, she was less hostile to it: but she never felt confident. She carried this prejudice to excess: she was downright foolish over it: but I do not regard it as a mere craze or obsession of her mind.

In the later years, she bore patiently, and strove to bear lightly, the failure of her social authority. *Si jeunesse scavait*, she would quote, *Si vieillesse pouvait*: or again, *But now the old is out of date, The new is not yet born*: would quote them with a half-hearted smile and a whole-hearted sigh. She said once, near the end of her days, that she felt as if a hand were writing on a wall of the large drawing-room; that she did not want an interpreter; no young

Daniel need apply; young men did not understand these things. At the last, I am told, she wandered a little in her mind, but very quietly: she said, some four or five times, "I do wish that they wouldn't." Last of all, there came a look of relief, and she said, very slowly, "Still—perhaps—after all": and, I am told, almost with a touch of laughter in her voice. Her grave is in a small country churchyard; where the village honours her memory, and is proud of her monument. They feel that it gives them a hold on greatness, to have among them this famous representative of the Victorian Age, who moved in grand society, but did not move with the times.

What do we mean, when we talk of moving with the times? If I walk down the corridor, toward the guard's van, I none the less move with the train. If, on the common here, I walk westward, I none the less move eastward, rolled round in earth's diurnal course, with rocks, and stones, and trees. Each of us, from babies to centenarians, moves with the times. They are the sum of ourselves, from the day of our birth to the day of our death. Far and fast I may walk in the wrong direction; but I shall arrive, punctual to the moment, at the right destination. Nor shall I get there any sooner, if I walk in the right direction. What we are coming to is what we are coming to; whether I run about, or sit still.

The wise critic says that I have idealised her;

that she had not a really nice or clean mind; that her influence over young women was tyrannical and ridiculous; influence over young men, she had none. Out of this collision of opinions, we are united in principle. We believe that things have gone wrong; that the fashions, amusements, and ethics of polite society are not so good as they used to be; that there is more than a touch of madness in them: and we do not see how they can be mended without a revival of the Puritan spirit. So we tear-up our irreconcilable pictures, flattery and caricature, of my old friend. It does not matter, now, what she was then. Whether she did, or did not, move with those times, it is certain that she would not be able to move with these: she would take to her bed, refuse her food, and welcome her death. Strange, how her old phrases—*What are we coming to? I do wish that they wouldn't*—have outlived her, and are even on the lips of her critics.

Here is neither study of her life nor analysis of her character: only some random notes about her, as it were for a memorial service or a funeral sermon. If it has been a funeral sermon, here is the text, at this end of it—*L'esprit humain fait progrès toujours, mais c'est progrès en spirale*. The movement of the times is an ascending and widening spiral movement, irregular, erratic, with many curves and kinks, changes of gradient, and far-flung loops: a most incalculable course: still, through all its cen-

trifugal vagaries, it is *en spirale* : therefore, early or late, coming round. Possibly, the times now have gone to the farthest limit of departure from things as they used to be. If that be so, they have already started to return. They will come to be less remote from the past than they are now: they will swing back toward it: only, they will move at a far higher level, and they will have a far wider range.

What will it feel like, when they do return? There will be no close resemblance in them to the early Victorian Puritanism: no multiplication of copies of my old friend's modes of thought. The times will be far above all that: far too spacious. The spirit of the times will be democratic, catholic, urgent, formidable; and will have in its hand a fan very different from hers, and will not hesitate to use it. Still, we shall be able to say that, after all, she was not wholly wrong: that she had, under all her narrow prejudices, a wise mind, and a remarkable gift of prophecy.

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